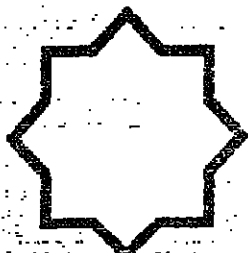


The Star



Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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See Page 6, 7 & 8

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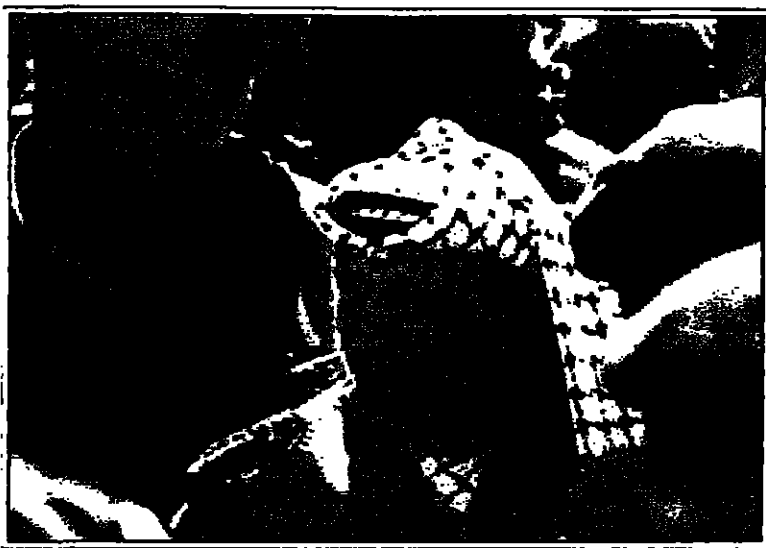
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AMMAN, 4—10 APRIL, 1996, VOLUME 6, NUMBER 48, 350 fils

Peres says referendum only an option, Arafat describes closure as a catastrophe

JERUSALEM (Agencies)—The new Palestinian Council held its first meeting on the West Bank Wednesday, convening in the autonomous city of Ramallah. Council members had a full agenda, not including one eagerly anticipated item, and they were welcomed to the West Bank by protesters.

Arafat, who flew to Ramallah by helicopter from his headquarters in Gaza to participate in the council meeting, had been expected to present his cabinet for approval at the session, but one of his aides said the list is not yet ready and will likely be submitted to the council at a meeting next week in Gaza.



President Yasser Arafat enters his limousine in Ramallah to travel to the first meeting of the Palestinian Council held in the West Bank. IPI photo

The council was expected to focus on the effects of the closure of Palestinian territories Israel imposed more than a month ago. The closure has kept tens of thousands of Palestinians from reaching their jobs in Israel and has also hurt Palestinian businesses which depend on the flow of goods into and out of Israel.

Arafat described the Israeli border closure, now running

into its fifth week, as a catastrophe.

Independent council member Hanan Ashrawi said she would also raise complaints about what she sees as the excessive

use of force by Palestinian security services, and the violation of human rights, during the current crackdown on militant groups.

A group of 1000 students at

nearby Beir Zeit university were prevented from marching on to where the council was meeting to protest the Palestinian police raids, as well as similar operations by Israeli troops.

When Arafat attempted to talk to the students he was jeered and could not finish his speech. Protesters clashed with Palestinian police, but no injuries were reported.

With national elections approaching next month, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres pledged Monday that he would submit any final peace accord with Palestinians to a referendum. His remarks, aimed at appeasing the Israeli public two months before the general elections, were angrily

received by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat who accused Peres of violating the Palestinian-Israeli accord.

Negotiating such a final accord with the Palestinians will be the task of the Israeli government to be elected May 29. Monday was the first time Peres suggested that he would give voters a direct say on the outcome, which is meant to settle the boundaries of Palestin-

Continued on page 2

Hamas vows to resume suicide bombings

JERUSALEM—The armed wing of the militant Islamic group, Hamas, Tuesday ordered the resumption of suicide attacks against Israel. In a statement sent to a news agency in Jerusalem, the Izzedine al Qassam Brigades said the renewed attacks are in response to the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israeli crackdown against Hamas.

The threat appeared aimed at both Israel and Yasser Arafat's Palestinian security forces. Israeli and Palestinian police have rounded up more than 1,000 suspected Islamic militants since the latest round of bombings began on 25 February. Hamas claimed responsibility for the four attacks that killed 58 people.

Kabariti says AFM crisis should ease by June as interest rate drops

AMMAN (Star)—Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti admitted Wednesday that there was a crisis at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) but told investors and traders that current imbalances should ease by June. The Prime Minister expressed his confidence in the solid standing of the Jordanian economy and said "Jordan is heading towards a better economic phase." But he cautioned that it may take up to two years before the "critical stage" is behind us.

Mr. Kabariti told members of the management of the AFM and representatives of dealers and investors that blame for the current imbalances should not be put on monetary policies alone. He said large banks, investment and holding companies, which absorbed liquidity and did not perform the duties for which it was licensed, are also to blame. Mr. Kabariti added that the current crisis is not a mirror of the general economic status of Jordan and pointed out that all indicators show that exports have grown in real terms. He said Jordanian

exports have increased from JD 2.1 billion in 1994 to JD 3.4 billion in 1995 and that exports have increased by 14 percent in the first month of this year.

The Prime Minister said Central Bank of Jordan reserves have always been a cause of concern for monetary policymakers in Jordan, but added that he can now confidently announce that "we have gone beyond all phases and reached a phase where the exchange rate is stable and the reserves are on the increase." He said that by June of this year all causes for maintaining high rate of interest will have gone. He said overuse of monetary tools should not be allowed, adding that the Government wants to encourage savings and attract investments.

He assured traders that the Government will at the beginning of the summer apply tools aimed at lowering the lending rate while allowing market forces to take over.

Mr. Kabariti said the coming two years will not be easy and "we may face many difficulties", but added that all eco-

conomic sectors "should work together to achieve the objectives of the economic restructuring program. He said policies should not be based on reactions and promised to give time to study the problems of the financial market.

He said trade relations with the Palestinians will be strong and special and said Jordan was pressuring Israel to remove all obstacles hindering free trade between Jordan and the Palestinian areas. He said the age of economic protocols is over and that the region must wake up to the philosophy of free trade.

In recent weeks, the AFM suffered large losses with the shares price index falling by 8.72 percent from the beginning of the year. AFM figures show that trading in March of was only JD 18 million compared to JD 37.4 million in March of last year, a decrease of 51 percent. During the first quarter of this year trade volume was JD 50.9 million compared to JD 82.6 million for the first quarter of last year, a drop of 38 percent.



Anti-personnel mines: Not a weapon of high military value

Geneva (ICRC)—A study commissioned by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has concluded that there is no evidence that anti-personnel landmines are weapons of high military value. In addition, their use in accordance with military doctrines is time-consuming, expensive and dangerous and has seldom occurred under combat conditions. The ICRC conclusions were based on a study of the actual use of anti-personnel mines since 1940. The results of this study confirm the ICRC's position that the military value of anti-personnel mines is far outweighed by their human and social costs and reinforces both its call for a ban of this type of weapons and its world-wide campaign against it.

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Gros plan sur l'économie jordanienne

A LIRE p. 16 dans LE JOURDAIN

Legal system riddled by schizophrenia Society indecisive about honor killings

By Eyad Ammari

Special to The Star

HONOR KILLINGS are a controversial subject in Jordan. On average, 30 women are murdered annually, though some claim that the number is double that.

Newspapers and women's groups speak frequently against the ugliness of honor killings, their efforts are yet to be echoed in society. Every incident becomes merely another statistic in record files.

Courts treat honor crime suspects with unbelievable leniency. Zahra Sharbati, a lawyer specialized in defending suspects in honor crimes, told *The Star* that both the case, and the punishment imposed on the suspect, are treated like any other murder crime. "But the judges always tend to use a 'reduction clause'."

The judges' argument is that the person committing the murder is "pressured" or "hypnotized" by social circumstances, so he cannot be held accountable for his actions. Article 98 of the Penal Code (no. 16, 1960) states: "He who commits a crime in a fit of fury caused by an unrightful and dangerous act on the part of the victim benefits from a reduction of penalty."

Another clause in the legal code states clearly: "if the plaintiff drops the case in honor crimes, the public right drops as well," stated Asma Khader, a lawyer and a human rights advocate.

The plaintiffs in such cases are the parents who are usually sympathetic to their child who committed the crime, especially after having already lost one," she added. Few people in the legal system seem to understand the consequences of so-called "honor killings."

Five points are worth discussing. Honor crimes are creating murderers; the courts and the people who support such acts are confusing cause with effect; a double standard is being applied; the legal codes are schizophrenic in dealing with the matter; and the Islamists are turning a deaf ear.

One brother killed his sister by slashing her throat then slashing her stomach. She died of course, but he still felt bad to shoot her just to let the neighbors know that he had "cleansed" the family's honor by killing his adulterous sister. Another brother hit his sister's head with a rock then stabbed her more repeatedly. Allegedly, such persons were "forced" to commit such crimes, and therefore received reduced sentences. Whether they previously had criminal

Continued on page 3

Brown thought to be on plane that crashed in the Adriatic

PARIS (Agencies)—The White House confirmed that US Commerce Secretary Ron Brown was on board a plane that crashed in the Adriatic Sea Wednesday. Secretary Brown was on an economic development mission to the Balkans with business executives. President Clinton's spokesman Mike McCurry confirmed reports that a wreckage of an aircraft has been spotted in the Adriatic Sea.

A search and rescue operation is underway.

The Brown aircraft was flying from Tuzla, Bosnia, to Dubrovnik, Croatia. Mr. McCurry could not comment on the cause of the crash of the aircraft, but he did note that weather in the region has been bad.

Diplomatic sources in Europe told the Associated Press that Brown's plane went down in stormy weather.

In Washington, a Pentagon source said wreckage of a crashed plane had been spotted in the area where Brown's plane was reported missing.

Brown had planned to spend three days in Bosnia and Croatia, meeting with American troops, government figures and local business leaders. The purpose of the trip was to whet American business appetites for rebuilding the country.



Iran's youth yearn for a less rigid life

By John Daniszewski

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

TEHRAN—Iran—Holding hands as they strolled through a crowded fairground on a brilliant day beneath snow-covered peaks, looking for bargains for the upcoming Persian New Year, Mariam and Reza were feeling less than sunny.

"Four times we have been checked: 'Who are you? What is your relationship to each other?'" said Mariam, 20, looking at Reza, whose 17-year-old face bore the first wisps of a mustache.

"I am his aunt," she said with irritation. In Iran, it is illegal for unrelated couples to venture out in public. The morals police are everywhere and punishment can be a fine or a caning.

Like many of her generation, Mariam said she was fed up.

"Doesn't everyone want to be free?" she asked.

When the leaders of the Islamic Revolution took power 17 years ago, they believed that they could turn back the

clock to a medieval Islamic world where women would cover themselves willingly and men would put devotion to God above material concerns.

But they did not reckon with human nature.

The more Iranians are compelled to believe in something, the less they like it.

And that is what is happening today in Iran. Ideology is dying. Concern for bread-and-butter issues is pre-eminent. Most important, the youth—the two-thirds of the population too young to remember what the country was like before the 1979 revolution—are frustrated, restive and turning their backs on the mullahs.

"Despite the impression on the outside, the Islamic Revolution is being made ever more pragmatic and secular," said Vahé Petrossian of the *Middle East Economic Digest* in London. "A lot of the pressure is coming from the younger generation."

At a moment when the United States is trying to rally

worldwide condemnation of Iran, there are, indeed, signs that the real threat to Islamic rule is from within—the 40 million or so Iranians who are younger than 25 and were brought up on revolutionary rhetoric.

Now, though, by and large, they yearn only for a better, less rigid life. Consider:

■ The regime's ban on satellite television, with its window on the outside world bringing in rock music, uncensored information and a message of cultural freedom, is widely flouted. Pirate satellite dishes are hidden in closets and brought out at night. Other Iranians are using telephones and modems to access the Internet and exchange news freely around the globe.

■ Economists estimate that the gross national product has grown, at most, at one percent to two percent annually in the 17 years since the revolution, a period in which the population has more than doubled. Foreign investment is almost nonexistent. Inflation rages at 60 percent.

"An increasing portion of the population is starting to feel pain," one Western diplomat in Tehran said. "The \$64 question is: When is that pain

going to result in another major social revolution?"

■ Elections this month provided voters little choice after clerical councils screened and eliminated thousands of would-be candidates who failed the test of religious purity. But within the narrow choice allowed, a ticket of modernizing pragmatists backed by President Hashemi Rafsanjani appears to have won a victory over religious conservatives.

■ Voices of dissent are growing bolder. Members of a small liberal opposition, the Freedom Movement, who until recently were denounced as "agents of America," nearly made it onto the ballot. Newspaper editors have risked shutdowns, fines and lashings to publish stories of alleged corruption. A working-class riot over bus fares south of Tehran last year drew sympathy from university students and acquired political overtones.

All these factors reflect youth-driven challenges to the country's governing elite—the alliance of clerics, security services and a group of 20 to 30 merchant families, or "bazzari," who control the economy and grow rich through trade monopolies and government

concessions.

For many of the young, the highly insular nature of the ruling circle is part of the problem.

"The government is run by a semi-monopolistic club whose members have a lifetime membership, and it's very hard for outsiders to get in," said Ali Rashidi, a prominent economist.

As a result, there is a sense, among college students especially, that the doors to success are closed.

"They say, 'Why should we study? Why should we finish college? What job is waiting for us?' ... Every year there are 50,000 college graduates, but the country cannot find jobs for even one out of five," Rashidi said.

Petrossian said younger Iranians also have higher expectations than their parents, who can clearly recall the hardships before the revolution in the waning days of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. Back then, he said, corruption was rampant, basic foodstuffs were missing from store shelves and electrical power would break down on a regular basis.

revolution, he said.

"The young generation takes whatever they have for granted, and that's their starting point," Petrossian said. "Now they want more and better."

They also are demanding less, when it comes to restrictions—finding ways to get around rules that deny them entertainment, self-expression and social contact with the opposite sex.

Clandestine parties where teenage boys and girls mingle and dance to rock music take place in private apartments. Alcohol and uncensored videos are distributed on the black market.

The *chador*, the shapeless black garment meant to cover a woman from head to toe with only part of the face exposed, is being relentlessly dressed up or thrown back—showing a flash of hair here or bold earrings there.

Although her head was modestly covered in black, Mariam wore a belted raincoat, designer eyeglass frames and carried a smart leather briefcase to project a sense of style.

Too wary of authorities to permit her full name to be published, she said a major headache for the young is getting married.

Ernst Degasperi One-man art show celebrates peace

By A. Hallway
Special to The Star

JORDAN'S FIRST ever Austrian exhibition is devoted to the Vienna-born artist Ernst Degasperi, whose works draw their inspiration from religious sources and from nature, especially the different root-formations of Alpine trees. Much of Professor Degasperi's artistic talent devotes itself to the promotion of inter-religious dialogue and understanding. His drawings and pictures primarily illustrate the message of peace and goodwill to all humanity, conveyed by the three great monotheistic religions: Islam, Judaism and Christianity.



Degasperi

In light of the peace process, Degasperi's belief is that peace can only be successfully achieved if the nations involved come to a deeper understanding of their common ancestry as followers of the Prophet Abraham.

His series called *Divine Attributes to Allah* represent Allah as a Source of Peace, The Loving, The All-Embracing, and The Giver of Life. Degasperi uses pen and ink-drawings and etchings of intricate and delicate designs using French colors of gold and silver on a black background.

A cycle of drawings called *The Song of Songs by Solomo*, represent a love song in the Bible, which was originally an Arabic love song. Degasperi says, "It was really a love song between God and his people, which means between Allah and Muslims and between 'Alloheim' and Jews and between God-Father and Christians. Because God-Father is the same in all religions, and for all he is the same God of Love and of Peace." He says his drawings "represent comfort for people who are suffering and have experienced cruelty, war, suffering and injustice, and the God of Love will correct all this because He is Righteousness, He is Love."

A cycle of drawings called *The Song of Creations by Saint Francis*, represent "that all creations of the world are our brothers and sisters and so we are responsible for ourselves, for our neighbors and for the whole creation." His etchings series, *Austrian Cities*, will also be exhibited. In addition to pen and ink-drawings and etchings, he uses dry-points, silk-prints, oil paintings, lithographs, and copper-art works.

Professor Ernst Degasperi, president of the international artist group called The Spiral, was born in 1927 in Meran, Italy, to an Italian father and an Austrian mother, but has made Vienna his home since 1942. Degasperi originally trained as a precision tool technician using the highest kind of machine-precision, making posters for fairs, drawing faces, borders and figures. He says in his most "wildest fantasies he could not draw these figures by hand" during this time. Due to World War II he chose to study at the Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna in 1948 and received a diploma in 1952.

While he was on vacation in the high Alpine Regions in 1963, he discovered for the first time the wild-torched roots. He saw as "a mountain of scrambled lines of life between the stones and the rocks, where we get a small seed which is growing—more and more—and now it becomes a political question which becomes stronger—to blow up the rocks—to become a fundamental issue as a result of this fight of survival against the forces of nature—emanating a stem to the light of the sun, and the tree becomes green and blooming." After discovering this revelation, within three days he made 110 brush-and-ink drawings.

Degasperi considers himself a religious Latin-Catholic, and has always been angered as a leader at his parish church, "about what God is saying and about what we as Christians are doing."

On August 20, 1963, "I exploded and felt a biblical and prophetic calling which totally changed my life," at which time he found himself a servant for the message of God with drawings and Bible-inspired poems.

Degasperi says he received sources of inspiration from the wild roots of the high Alpine trees in Austria which became a lifeline in his art, and also from the deserts of Israel, Egypt and Jordan, where he has drawn canyons and salt mountains.

His works were presented during the International Christian-Islamic Conference in Vienna in 1993 and by the International Conference on Islam-Judaism-Christianity in Vienna in 1994. Degasperi has traveled the world with his exhibition, from Hong Kong to Bangkok to Manila. He says his final exhibition will be held in Israel.

Degasperi has received numerous awards including those from Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II. Most of Degasperi's exhibitions abroad have been sponsored by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Professor Ernst Degasperi's Exhibition of Graphic Art will be presented at the Royal Cultural Centre from April 6-16, under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Hassan and the Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria, Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel, as well as the Austrian Embassy in Amman.



● Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor returned home, Wednesday, from the United States. The King had a successful operation in his right ear. Their Majesties were met at the Queen Alia International Airport by Prince Ra'ad Bin Zeid, Princess Basma, and other members of the Royal family. Also there was Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabari, the Speakers of both houses of Parliament, and other state officials. The King told reporters that he was in good health. He said he will do his utmost to support Palestinians and ease their suffering.

Australian envoy praises Jordan's role in peace process

By Hamdan Al Hajj
Special to The Star

THE NEWLY appointed ambassador of Australia to Jordan, Ms Merry Wickes, praised the "warm and strong relations" between her country and Jordan and said she hoped these relations would strengthen substantially at all levels in the future.

Ms Wickes told The Star that she has held a number of meetings with representatives of the economic community in Jordan with the aim of bolstering economic cooperation between her country and Jordan. She said she expected a delegation from the Australian Chamber of Commerce to visit

Jordan by the end of this year. Of particular interest to the diplomat is technology transfer, and trade and tourism. Ms Wickes said Jordan had a lot to offer to Australian tourists in terms of its rich archaeological heritage.

In addition she stressed the need to increase cooperation in cultural areas, education, technology, painting, literature and said she was looking forward to seeing her country participate in the Jerash Festival.

Ms Wickes said that Australia holds Jordan's role in the peace process which she described as significant and genuine in high regard. "Australia supports Jordan's political role in the peace process,"



Ms Wickes

she added. "It is important that the peace process should succeed in order for all countries in the

region to benefit," she added. The ambassador further stressed that her country has worked to enhance the peace process and is involved in working groups especially in the areas of arms control and water.

She said peace is the best chance for the tourism sector to thrive, creating much needed jobs. "Tourism will also help people understand the importance of this area," she said.

Ms Wickes said her country is also interested in supporting regional cooperation and that she is looking for ways to make certain contributions and identify areas in which her country can offer support.

Lower House Speaker stresses the need for an extraordinary session

AMMAN (Star)—Lower House Speaker, Mr. Saad Hayel Srour addressed the press, Wednesday, on the achievements of the House after the four month ordinary session which was adjured Tuesday 2 April.

He stated that around 44 deputies submitted a petition to the Prime Minister, Mr. Abdul Karim Al Kabari demanding an extraordinary session of the Lower House. Constitutionally, His Majesty the King may summon the Lower House to meet in an extraordinary session at the request of an absolute majority of deputies.

In an extraordinary session, deputies can only discuss certain issues specified in the Royal Decree which calls for the convening of the session.

Mr. Srour stated that "it is up to the King to include suggestions for deputies in the Decree."

He added that "the extraordinary session is vital for discussing several essential issues for the country and people."

He pointed out that the petition includes nine draft and temporary laws which were submitted to the Lower House to be discussed. Temporary laws include the amended law of Parliamentary elections, the Civil Status law, the law of the Civil Security Service, and the law of the Jordanian Medical Council.

The draft laws include the law for banning alcohol, the



Srour

amended law of Jordanian Universities, the law of higher education, the law of civil courts and the law for the organiza-

tion of vocational work. The 44-deputy petition presented several other suggestions to the extraordinary session which include amendments on the laws of military and civil retirement, passports and citizenship, as well as suggestions for a new Parliamentary election law.

In addition, deputies presented several public issues for study like the policy of supply, the economic policy, general management, Jordanian-Arab relations and the agricultural policy.

Public liberties and the rights of citizens also have their fair share in the petition, and discussing the Audit Bureau report is also on the chart.

On another note, Parliamentary delegates headed by Mr. Srour will leave to Istanbul on 14 April to participate in the 95th conference of the International Parliamentary Union, which will be held from 15 to 20 April.

Mr. Srour said the conference will focus on the issue of terrorism and how to combat it. "We have a vested interest in this subject, because the Middle East and Islam are accused of being a source of terrorism," Mr. Srour said. "It will be our chance to clarify the fact that terrorism is not linked with a certain religion or area. It could happen anywhere."

He added that "it is impossible to combat terrorism by terrorism and by collective punishment, because violence leads to violence."

Honor killings

Continued on page 1

Emoush. The brothers and parent, believing in the righteousness of killing a sister for adultery, claim they do it out of religious piety, while religion itself forbids their actions," he added. Religion states that "he or she who commits adultery gets 100 whips if not married, and death if (she) he is or ever was married," added Dr. Al Emoush. Nevertheless, religion states that a Sharia court must take the decision, and four witnesses must testify to the adultery.

"The other problem is that it's almost impossible for any wife to prove the adultery of her husband, but it's almost accepted as a fact if it was the other way around," added Ms. Khader. Statistics do not even show a single case of a brother killing his brother for adultery, either.

Double standards, exemplified in allowing the "fury clause," allow people to commit such murders with less fear than they would while committing another crime. But "the presence of this clause is counter-productive because its use is hardly allowed by judges in other cases," added Ms. Khader.

If this article were to be used by lawyers to the benefit of their clients, especially as the clause puts the word "crime" without any specific reference to what kind of crime it is, then a person disenchanted "by his employer for being fired should benefit from the clause if he murders or injures him," continued Ms. Khader.

With the establishment of legal systems, experts and philosophers realized that a person must have a "free-will." It is acknowledged that a person is born with certain genetic codes, but later becomes a product of their circumstances as they grow up and go through the experience of life—"therefore, a person can never act entirely of free-will," said Ms. Khader. So in order to run societies and build safer cities, people have been given the title of "acting of their own free will."

That was done to make them responsible for their acts and to accordingly punish them, deter them from committing other crime, or in some cases, to reward them. The "fury clause," therefore, is the antithesis of modern governments and legal systems. "The clause recognizes the human being as irresponsible for his/her acts, and as becoming merely a machine that functions according to circumstances of the crime. Circumstances may, and should affect the punishment imposed, but the murderer is never totally irresponsible for his or her acts," said Ms. Khader. In fact, the existence of a legal system, articulated by the legal code, proves otherwise. This split personality of the code itself is a loop-hole that allows for a further disintegration of the society. "When adultery is a sign of immorality, murder is the decadence of society," added Ms. Khader.

The legal codes pertaining to honor killings in Jordan have their roots in the Dark Ages of Europe. "The codes are not Islamic," reiterated Dr. Al Emoush. "Islamic scholars, even at Al Azhar could not reach a conclusion on whether a brother killing his sister is a crime of the *Kaba'er*, but they agreed that it is a crime, and that any such judgement should be passed only through an Islamic court."

Khader. However, "it's apparent that the subject is being treated as a taboo," said Ms. Rana Al Hussein, a journalist specializing in honor killings and a recipient of the MED/Media Journalism award for a report she conducted on the subject. "If everyone stands back and says adultery and murder are wrong but they don't happen to us, then who is going to recognize the problem as it is," Ms. Hussein added.

If Jordan "expects to enter the 21 century with its promised standards, maybe 1960 rules should be revised," concluded Ms. Khader.

Surveying the history of the Islamists, whether as Parliamentary members or otherwise, they tried to pass many laws that were against corruption, trying more than any other party to create social reform. Yet, and very surprisingly, they never gave any attention to honor crimes, though all the related acts go against the strict teachings of Islam.

"I know that something should be done about it, and I promise to raise the matter in front of the parliament, but I'm not very hopeful. We still have 91 legal codes to discuss, and I can't say when we can ever get to do anything regarding honor killings," added Dr. Al Emoush. "The Government must intervene if we are to expect any change."

Human rights and women's groups are trying to create a change, but their efforts are still to accomplish change. A petition to the parliament has been written, "and a written protest or a demonstration must be addressed to the council of ministers," said Ms.

tion of vocational work. The 44-deputy petition presented several other suggestions to the extraordinary session which include amendments on the laws of military and civil retirement, passports and citizenship, as well as suggestions for a new Parliamentary election law.

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Food Security A stressing issue for survival

By Harry Pullens
Special to The Star

THERE WAS slightly more room for optimism as Jordan's Environmental Society (JES) in cooperation with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) held a one-day seminar on food security.

The conference, which brought lecturers, experts, farmers and industrialists to discuss the issue that is currently dominating the environmental debate was attended by over 180 participants.

The conference stressed that food production is not only decreasing, but it is also endangered due to technology, land degradation, environmental pollution and use of insecticide and pesticide.

Topics discussed included: alternative approaches to food production and supply: fishing and agriculture; state of agricultural food production in the Kingdom; bio-technology. Environmental dangers and their impacts on food production and supply was also addressed together with the dangers of chemical and mechanical intensive agriculture.

"We hope to bring these problems to the forefront to achieve a healthy food production in a polluted and constantly deteriorating environments," Dr. Sufyan Al Tell, a member of the JES told The Star. "We are also trying to encourage an increase in food production as between 80%-90% of Jordan's food is imported from abroad."

In his address to the seminar, FNF representative in Jordan and Lebanon, Mr. Walter Rudel, voiced concern that the world's natural resources which were built up over millions of years were largely exhausted because of the industrialization that took place in the last 200 years.

He said the world is already paying a high price for the "green revolution" which resulted in continued high use of fertilizers, improved seeds, mechanical and chemical intensive farming.

Mr. Rudel maintained that 17 million hectares of world forests diminish each year because the green revolution intensified to cope with the rising population.

He feared for the reduction in the world grain harvests which have become the most basic of commodities.

Besides encouraging environmentally-friendly technology, Rudel believes sustainable development can only be achieved if population growth can be controlled.

"Our world has entered a new era, one endangered with uncertainty on how to feed the projected massive growth of world population.... Either science will have to come up with new methods and rapidly expanding food production, or population levels and dietary patterns will be forced to adjust to much tighter supplies," he said.

One of the big questions that surfaced was the currently threatening "mad cow disease". Many experts surmised that intensive cow holdings, inadequate farming methods and unnatural dietary methods are possibly responsible for the disease. Some believed that the disease is a warning to animal farmers everywhere and called for organic and natural farming methods.

"The mad cow disease is still vague, though often exaggerated, but there's danger in the background, it is a warning to every one, Rudel told The Star." If this disease is firmly established, the world may be moving towards a catastrophe, but fortunately only 10 cases have been detected so far among people below 40 years of age."

Dr. Tell, an environmental expert with UN agencies, said the disease starts first in the minds of people as they seek to change the natural habitat and food of the animals.

Mr. Ziyad Alawneh, the director of the National Environmental Information and Education Program (NEIEP), a division of JES and funded by FNF, said the seminar is part of the society's program to promote public environmental awareness.

"We are also trying to provide the public with useful information which is not readily available in the country."

Apart from providing a platform where people can gather together and discuss issues that are of major concern to them, Alawneh maintains that the Environmental Society tries to involve people everywhere to participate in the environmental movement.

INVITATION TO RETENDER THE SUPPLY OF EQUIPMENT TO THE NEW FACILITY OF EDUCATION SCIENCES AT MU'TAH UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (ICB).

- The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has received a loan related to Human Resources Development project from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development - the World Bank - and intends to apply part of proceeds of this Loan to eligible payments for the supply of the goods and services covered by this invitation.
- The Respective purchasers namely: Mu'tah University in Karak.

hereby invite local and international suppliers of educational equipment in subject being taught in the Faculty of Education Sciences of MU to apply for bidding documents and to submit tenders (bids) for the equipment to be provided to the various laboratories, workshops and classrooms of the Faculty.

- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the Bidding Documents at the liaison office of Mu'tah University located at Samir Rifai St.-Jabal Amman between hours 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturday through Thursday beginning March 30, 1996 to April 14, 1996.
- A complete set of the Bidding Document may be obtained from the above referred office upon submission of a written application and payment of a non refundable fee. All payments will be made by a bank draft or certified bank check in the currency of the purchaser's choice or in cash made out in favour of the Mu'tah University. Price of purchasing the documents would be the equivalent, amount of Jordanian Dinars as follows:
 - For delivery in personal callers JD 15,000 per lot.
 - For delivery by local mail to local Bidders by courier Service JD 25,000 per lot.
 - For delivery to over seas Bidders by courier Service JD 25 per lot plus JD 50 for all lots.

Bids will be priced and submitted separately for each individual lot. Contracts will be awarded on a Lot (by/Lot) basis to the lowest evaluated bidders who would prove capable to carry out the requirements of the contracts to be signed. Bidders could be awarded more than one contract of each.

Closing date for the bid submission will be noon at 12 O'clock, on May 28, 1996. Bids shall have a validity of 90 days and will be accompanied by a bid security to the value of about 3% of the Bid Price and of duration of 120 days.

Mu'tah University

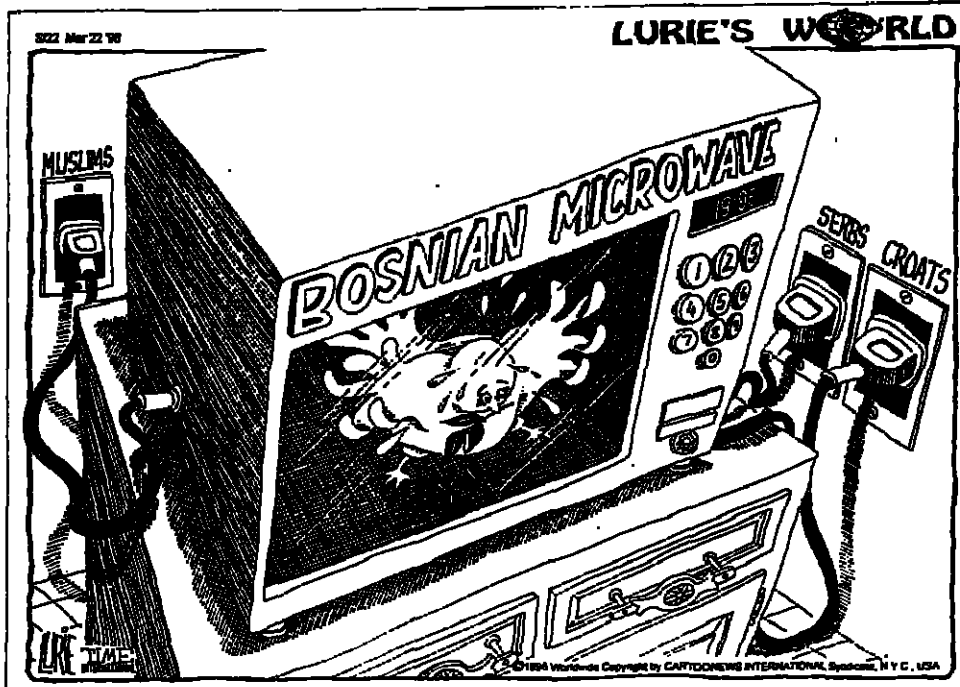
INTER-CONTINENTAL

50 YEARS OF GLOBAL HOSPITALITY

Many happy returns from all of us at

The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly



Our Say...

Bitter legacy of peace

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Shimon Peres' visit to two Gulf states this week will likely bolster his standing before his own people. And why not? He has acted tough since the wave of suicide bomb attacks which shook the Israeli public and sent the peace process into a bottomless hole. He has slapped an unprecedented siege around the Palestinian territories, now running into its sixth week, bringing the Palestinian economy to its knees and more than 1.5 million Arabs to the brink of starvation. He has reintroduced the notorious policies of house demolition and expulsion of Palestinian activists who oppose the peace process. Israeli soldiers and Palestinian security police have stormed universities, colleges and villages in pursuit of students and young Palestinians thought to disapprove of Arafat's deal with Israel.

Above all, Peres has suspended further negotiations with the Palestinians and postponed indefinitely Israel's withdrawal from Hebron. His main concern is now to win May's general elections, and in order to hit that point, he has to appear as uncompromising as his opponent, Benjamin Netanyahu, on matters of security and lands. But in doing so, Peres has compromised on the most important component of the peace process: justice.

It is disheartening to see this reversal in Palestinian fortunes while Israel continues to reap the fruits of its half-backed peace with the Arabs. Peres' visit to Oman and Qatar was an insult not only to the Palestinians who are made prisoners of their own homes, but also to all Arabs and Muslims. These countries have shown no sensitivity to the plight of the Palestinians who are being punished collectively.

Peres has his own political agenda. We would be surrendering our fate too easily to the dictat of such an agenda if we, as Arabs, wait and watch, keeping our fingers crossed and praying that Peres, the peacemaker, survives the next elections and resumes the peace process. This would be gullible and naive. Peace in the region must be based on genuine desire by all parties concerned. No one party should be singled out to pay the heavy price of peace in the Middle East—least of all the Palestinians. They have paid enough.

The siege must end immediately and the dialogue must continue. Peres must show acumen and courage if he is to fulfill the prophecy of peace-making. He must also come up boldly and declare that the true sense of peace gives the Palestinians a homeland of their own, and that the land of Palestine can only enjoy peace if the two peoples accept coexistence on equal footing.

On his part, Arafat must seize the moment to emerge as the historic leader of his people. The witch hunt has gone far enough, and when Palestinian security men storm universities and colleges, arrest people in hundreds, subject some to torture and others to intimidation, the fine line that once separated the occupier from the liberation fighter becomes fuzzy and unrecognizable. This is not the Palestine that thousands had perished for. Arafat's legacy to his people is bitter and revolting. ■

Interesting web sites on the Internet

Here are some useful sites on the World Wide Web:

■ Two excellent Web sources for following Comet Hyakutake and its close encounter with earth.

JPL Hyakutake Home Page:
<http://newproducts.jpl.nasa.gov/comet/hyakutake>

■ "Night of the Comet":
<http://george.arc.nasa.gov/comet/>
The Jet Propulsion Laboratory's "Hyakutake" home page offers news articles from various sources, over 200 images and links to other Hyakutake pages. "Night of the Comet" is a virtual star party devoted to the appearance of Comet Hyakutake. It connects to information about the comet, as well as suggested school activities connected to it. Its "Ask an Expert" section provides a chat room, as well as an interactive question and answer page.

■ The Black Film Center Archive (BFCA) of Indiana University "is a repository of films and related materials by and about African Americans." Its holdings list of over 700 films and video cassettes, as well as archival photo-

graphs, is available. And there are pointers to other film sites:
<http://www.indiana.edu/bfca/index.html>

■ The Yahoo browser has launched "Yahooligans," a searchable and browsable index of the Internet designed specifically for 8 to 14 year olds. At present the main categories are "Around the World," "Art Soup," "Computers and Games Online," "Entertainment," "School Bell," "Science and Oddities," "Sports and Recreation," and "The Scoop."
<http://www.yahooligans.com/> (Text only) <http://www.yahooligans.com/text/>

■ The US Census Bureau has recently updated national, state and county population estimates through 1995. State and county population estimates are now available in various components and dating from 1990-1995:
<http://www.census.gov/tftp/pub/population/www/popest.html>

Source: USIS

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Editorial & Advertising: Telephones 652-380, 645-380, Fax 648-298, P.O. Box 3313, Postal Code 11191 Amman - Jordan. email: Star@nets.com.jo

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

Osama El-Sherif

Managing Editor

Dr Marwan Al Asmar

Assistant Editor

Avni Abu Ghosh

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China rumbles toward super power status

By Carrie Nelle Moye
Star US correspondent

THE EVENTS of the past few weeks surrounding Taiwan's presidential elections, China's military exercises around the island and the US diplomatic and military moves around Taiwan have attracted world attention.

They have reminded the international community that there are other flash points on our globe other than the Israel/Palestinian-Israeli/Syrian conflicts, wars among the former Soviet republics, and the other Balkan powder keg ever ready to reignite.

The rumblings coming from China and Taiwan caused some pessimists to fear the worst: a possible military confrontation between the US and China that could escalate into a worst possible scenario, a nuclear war. These pessimists have even feared a North Korean attack against South Korea in support of China, should there be open hostilities between China and the United States.

Other less dramatic analysts have speculated there would be a more benign scenario, classical air and naval battles reminiscent of World War II confrontations between the US and Japan in the Pacific.

Thus far all these fears have proved groundless. In reality, China has nothing to win from an open war with the US; rather, it has everything to lose.

It would lose its immense economic momentum; it would lose every important trade link with Japan and other pro-American economic tigers in Asia, including Singapore, South Korea, Indonesia

and Australia. Further, it would jeopardize sizable trade benefits with the US and Western Europe and would physically risk much destruction to its economic, civilian infrastructure and military installations. And of course there would be much loss of human life, though, historically, this has been of secondary consideration to the leaders of the over-populated China.

China knows very well that it cannot match the US in modern military technology or hardware. Likewise it knows that the US will not let itself be drawn into a conventional land-jungle war a-la-Vietnam where Chinese numbers and low-tech strategies would have the advantage.

So why did China act as it did if it did not seek a military

confrontation? Why did China go to the limit of exchanging threats with the US then tone down its language at the last minute? The answer lies in China's desire—perhaps its destiny, according to adherents of such beliefs—of higher vision to become the next superpower in the world, not necessarily in lieu of the defunct Soviet Union, but a superpower in the world, not necessarily in lieu of the defunct Soviet Union, but a superpower in its own right, representing Asia, the East, the Third World, a superpower that would restore some equilibrium in global power politics since America has monopolized the position since 1990. Ultimately, China hopes to give Asia a political/military weight commensurate with its economic and human

tial.

The US and the Soviet Union, in the eyes of the Third World, represented the white/Caucasian element of mankind, much more than they represented the ideological struggle between capitalism/democracy and communism/despotism. The Chinese rift with the Soviet Union beginning in the 1960s continued until the demise of the USSR. It historically was a rebellion of Chinese/Third World underdog communists against European/white/communist domination.

When most of the Third World watched China challenge the US around Taiwan, in reality it was cheering the expected birth of the next superpower from among its own ranks. China knows that the 21st century will be the era of the rebirth and expansion of Asia socially, economically, and politically and consequently has to demonstrate early enough that it will be the leader of the future Asia.

Taiwan was an occasion: the military maneuvers were a gesture. But the implication is written in large letters on the Eastern sky. If there had not been the election in Taiwan, China would have found another occasion and made other gesture to deliver the identical message.

Let no one be surprised if China, from time to time, presents the world with this message in whatever form. And let us not forget that great powers, like volcanoes, demonstrate their presence and ascent with rumblings. China's birth as a Superpower will be preceded by many more tremors and rumbling.

And then there is the rumbling of discontent within our own borders as presently represented by the Freeman. But that's another column. ■



"As Chairman Mao himself said: a trip of a thousand miles starts with one step!"

Baring's Rogue Trader tells his own story

Rogue Trader, by Nick Leeson and Edward Whitley, UK, Little Brown and Co., pp273.

Reviewed by Nadia Al Anani

NICK LEESON has finally opened his account and told his own version of Barings Bank's sudden collapse. He is blamed for losses which amounted to £860 million. These losses were attributed to large, dangerous and unauthorized speculations into the Singapore and Japan stock exchange markets. While he conceived Barings as obtaining large profits, Leeson was actually concealing huge losses in a secret error account numbered 8888.

The book is an autobiography, focusing in particular on the author's role in the Barings saga.

It starts with a prologue which is supposed to attract the reader to the breath-taking events of the author's life beginning with his disappearance from Singapore and backwards. Unfortunately, he lacks the skill to make the best out of a potentially very interesting read.

In the first chapter, he takes the reader to his early humble childhood as a plasterer's son in Watford, just outside London. He portrays himself as a young, ambitious and amusing child and young man. "I managed to be both a swot and a lad, which was unprecedented."

Throughout the book he shows pride in leading a double life and having a double character. He was the hard working employee who made his way to the top as well as a playboy and made no secret of the fact that he spent a night in jail for indecent exposure. Though it is well-known that he failed his A-Level maths examination, he does not mention this fact in his book.

The book becomes eventually more interesting as the author starts to reveal the story of the 88, account. He explains how he lied, forged documents, suppressed information and submitted false accountancy journals.

As expected, he tells the

story from a defensive point of view, explaining that there were many contributory factors to Barings' failure. A single man, he contends, cannot render a large financial group bankrupt. He explains how he perceived his job saying, "all the money we dealt with was unreal; abstract numbers which flashed across screens or jumped across the trading pit with a flurry of hands."

He goes on to describe his everyday feeling, saying "it was the opening of the market, anything could happen, anything was possible. It was very dangerous. I could take a step forward and with just one wave of the hand buy or sell millions of pounds."

He also blamed the bank for exposing him to temptation as they gave him two conflicting positions: head of the trading floor and head of the back office.

Leeson claimed that the senior management at Barings merely pushed him hard to earn more so that their bonuses (a percentage of the profits) would increase. He explained that he could not have earned that huge amount of money unless he went beyond his authority and they should have known that.

There were

also rumors in the market about his positions which were bought to Barings attention by the Bank of International Settlements. Internal auditors also recommended a split of responsibilities between the back office and the trading floor but this recommendation was never implemented.

Barings in fact ignored these warning signs and continued to fund Leeson's dealings from London.

Was there a cover-up? This question remains open. Leeson merely pointed a finger at a number of senior managers in Barings and claimed that they should have known about his dealings. He did not mention that there was a deliberate cover-up between any of them and himself.

It is interesting to know that the UK Board Supervision did not rule out the possibility that



Leeson

Leeson was acting in concert with others. The Ministry of Finance in Singapore took a further step as they had wider access in documents and stated that Barings management either knew or should have known about the 88, account.

Whatever the truth is, the message to every banker is clear: be extremely alert. ■

Middle East Beat

by Khairi Jambek

Israeli Elections

Each time the Israeli elections loom on the horizon, the game of percentages and political bets always starts in Jordan. We are invariably affected by the elections of our close neighbor. But ultimately, what is on the mind of the Israeli electors are issues that concern them directly.

The force of habit drives us in Jordan to start predicting results, and pontificate on Israeli foreign policy issues. One can only say force of habit, because, logically, the transparency which the Hashemite leadership of Jordan has dealt with the question of peace with Israel should eradicate old habits of analysis, and promote schools of thought that tackle with open faces and straight figures.

It is no secret that the Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent met recently representatives of the executive, judiciary and legislative powers of the Israeli political system. Reports regarding those meetings were widely published.

To start building conspiratorial theories, and create absurd scenarios for others advising them what to do when they assume power is illogical, and does not correspond with the spirit of the times. Or is it that we still do not believe in transparency when we see it, and honesty when we assimilate it, and prefer to weave imaginative tales of comfort that will devour us?

A political party or an individual personality fighting for elections does promise the electorate the sun, the moon and a rose garden. The Jordanian electorate is victims of such ploys, perpetrated by our Parliamentarians.

But, to take the statements and promises of Israeli politicians to their electorate at face value, is a folly, unless we assume that they are more honest than our own politicians, in which case our inferiority complex is perceived as beyond redemption.

Rumors are abound that Netanyahu released one statement or another, and that Rabin also said something that did or did not make sense. The fact remains that we should approach such matters with intelligence and admit that a political party contesting power, is not a political party in power. Therefore, such a party has all the privileges of maneuvering and issuing statements with impunity.

Netanyahu will keep giving his program of action, and his coalition partners will be pleased with the line of his policy. But if he gets to power, he will have to deal with a set of circumstances related to the internal, external and the Occupied Territories and then turns to his partners. That would require more talent than being in opposition, and certainly the responsibilities of the Israeli Prime Minister are not the same as those of the leader of the opposition.

The same goes for Mr Peres. He is the current Prime Minister, and his statements do reflect the policies of the Israeli government. The constraints of office are obvious, but on the other hand, he will have to make some promises as the leader of the opposition, an opposition to the Likud Party. On this count, there will also be many promises made, mainly realisable, but mostly for public consumption.

Among the many statements made, and the promises given, one theme in the Israeli elections will determine the tone of the campaign, and that is the question of security. Many divergent points will emerge between the coalitions, but the underlying factor of unity will be, security.

No matter what the expectations are, on our side, the fact remains that Israel will not consider any proposal that seemingly jeopardizes its own security. ■

Business scene

The Jordan Fund for Arab Cooperation has been set up to cover the costs of the second stage of the Jordanian-Syrian peace process. The fund is to be launched this week.

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Business scene

■ The Japan Fund for Overseas Cooperation has granted Jordan a \$103 million loan to cover the cost of the second stage of the Aqaba Thermo Station. In 1994, the fund granted Jordan a \$47 million loan to launch this project.

■ The total deposits at banks amounted to JD 5,787 billion till December '95, the CBI Bulletin shows. This is compared to JD 5,372 billion at December 1994. These deposits are of three categories: on order, savings and on notice. Deposits from the private sector were JD 3,537 billion compared to JD 3,296 billion in 1994. As for public departments, deposits reached JD 437 million, compared to JD 347 million in 1994.

■ The International Arab Education Investments Corp., made JD 12.85 million, (JD 12.85 million as revenues from the University of Applied Sciences). The shareholders equity grew by 17 percent, that is JD 15.23 million, and the company's investments were worth JD 2.4 million.

■ The latest figures for the assets of the Central Bank of Jordan were JD 3,269,845. CBI gold assets were worth JD 138,832,000. In convertible currencies, the assets were valued at JD 1,479,100,000 as liquidity and deposits; JD 97,915,000 in bonds; JD 49,497,000 assets of trade agreements; JD 31,479,000 contributions in regional and international financial institutions.

■ The International Finance Corp. (IFC) of the World Bank agreed to grant a \$6 million loan to the Jordanian Aluminium Co. The loan will be invested in building a new branch of this industry in Irbid outside Amman. The company's production will increase by 6000 tons per year, 75% of which will be merchandised locally, while the rest exported.

■ Al Daminoum Al Arab Insurance was established this week as a public shareholding company at a paid up capital JD 1 million. The 98 founding members have covered 50% of the total capital, while the other half will be put for public subscription.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 3 APRIL

	Buy JD	Sell JD
	0.7080	0.7100
	1.0782	1.0836
	0.4771	0.4795
	0.5924	0.5954
	0.1401	0.1408
	0.6580	0.6613
	0.4265	0.4286
	0.0451	0.0453

Al Reisha may be the key to Jordan's energy problems

AMMAN (Star)—Jordan might be a step closer to becoming an oil state. This week an agreement was signed by the Jordan and the US to continue exploring for this strategic material that may change the face of the Jordanian economy.

Oil was discovered in Al Azraq (Hamza Field) in 1984 by the Natural Resources Authority (NRA). It produced 600 barrels of oil per day, but by 1994, production dropped to around 30 barrels. NRA reports show that accumulative production is around 705,000 barrels.

In 1987 Al Risha field was discovered. Dry gas was found in the RH-3 well, and two years later, two wells began to produce 20 million cubic feet of gas daily.

Three more wells were connected to a new treatment plant in 1993. It began to supply the power station with 27-30 million cubic feet of gas per day.

About 80,000 square kilometers of Jordan's 91,000 square kilometers are covered by sedimentary rocks. However, the areas explored cover no more than 10,000 square kilometers. Around 33,000 square kilometers of seismic lines were shot and more than 90 wells drilled. Most of this has been concentrated in three clusters: the Risha gas field, the Hamza-Rajil in Azraq, and the East Sirhan area.

When it decided to explore for oil and gas in 1977, Jordan opened the door for foreign companies to work in areas planned by NRA. Examples can be seen in the Azraq area which NRA left to Amoco; the broad Risha area was left to

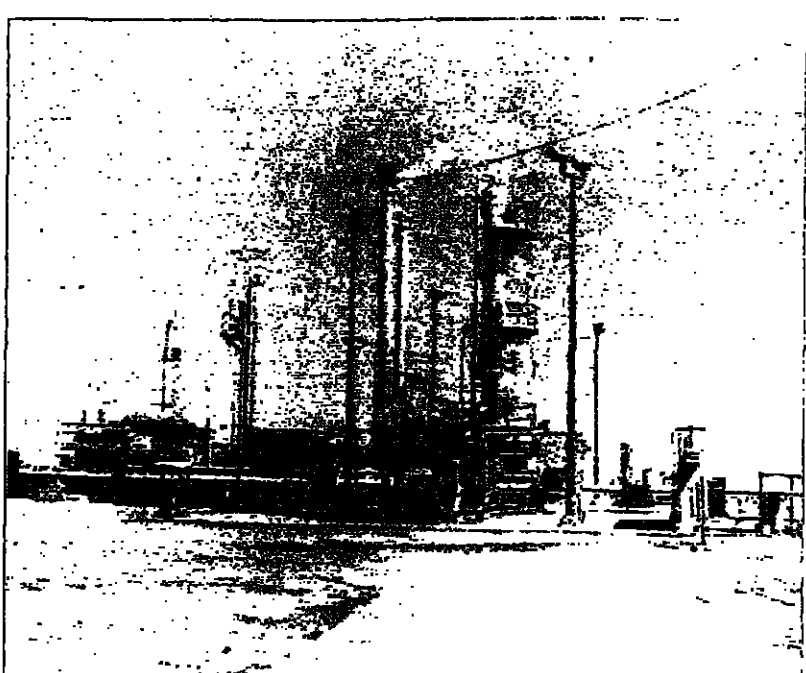
the Korean Hanbo.

NRA is ready to leave Risha, the Jordan Valley or parts of them to foreign investors if a good deal is struck. It would like to move to other areas that have been shelved, such as the northern highlands, North Azraq, Basalt, Sirhan, or central Jordan. But greater effort is needed for the exploration of much more areas. The ratio of wells to land is about 1:1000.

A recent ESCWA study on oil development and gas in selected ESCWA countries says that drilling activities began in Jordan after the Edwin Pauly Oil Co. obtained a concession for the whole country in 1957. One year later, the Phillips Co. drilled the first well, in Sweileh (SW-1). Joined by the Yugoslav INA and the American Filon, Phillips continued drilling. Eight wells were drilled up until 1978.

NRA began its own exploration in 1980. It has drilled 79 wells, 11 of these are in production. Foreign companies drilled six wells. NRA, however, is the only party that found oil and gas in the country.

In 1978, NRA conducted the first seismic survey over Risha



Al Reisha field promises to put Jordan on the oil map

which extends between the Basalt area in the west and the Iraqi border in the east. The gas potential in Risha is great because it is adjacent to the Iraqi border in the east and to Saudi Arabia in the south. The Risha gas field is structural high consisting of many stratigraphic traps. Some believe they are tidal channels, others believe they are bars. A third group believes the reservoir is a combination of these two, while a fourth group believes they are stacks of different sandstones with different environments and physical characteristics.

Another problem is the tightness of reservoir sandstone. The porosity of the producing sand varies between 5%-12%. Many wells penetrated the reservoir sand but produced nothing owing to its tightness.

The bay zones are two sandstone units lying immediately below the thick Mudawara shale of the early Silurian period. These two units of the Risha Dubeideh formation are separated by siltstone. There is a rule of thumb concerning the Risha structural high that any well that encounters the Risha member sandstone and has a porosity of more than 5% must be a producer.

The drilling program in Risha calls for three completely different procedures in three

different sections. The first consists of different kinds of rocks (limestone, sandstone, dolomite, and marl). The second is of overpressured shale which calls for high-density drilling fluid. The third consists of sandstone and siltstone with subnormal pressure.

In the past, the NRA paid around \$2 million to drill a well; now it is reduced to \$1 million. Experts believe that the drilling cost could be drastically reduced if the first section of the wells (i.e. 1,200-1,300 metres) were drilled by applying an air drilling method.

The first discovery well in Risha was drilled in 1986, tested and found commercially viable in 1987. It was proved to be capable of delivering 12-15 million cubic feet of gas per day. This encouraged the Government to build a power station in the area with 30-MW turbines to be fired by natural gas produced from Risha wells. This power station began operations in March 1989. It added 9% to the installed electrical-power generation capacity in Jordan.

A third turbine began operating in the station in September '93. More gas was delivered, and the capacity of the Risha Power Station reached 90-MW. This means that 13% of Jordan's electricity generation came from the Risha field.

Since October '94, a fourth turbine with a 30-MW capacity has been operating, raising the participation of gas in Jordan's electricity generation to around 18%. This is equivalent to 5%-6% of Jordan's total consumption of oil. ■

World Bank chief says Jordan will become a major competitor in the region and on world level

AMMAN (Star)—World Bank President James Wolfensohn concluded on Saturday, a three-day visit to Jordan with a press conference at which he reiterated the Bank's pledge to help the Jordanian government address the problems of poverty and unemployment through the promotion of small and medium-size business. He also announced the Bank's decision to grant Jordan a \$40 million loan to develop its exports, and to credit a local aluminium company \$6 million to expand its plant.

While appraising Jordan's success in achieving major economic reforms during the past few years, Wolfensohn said that such a reform program would transform Jordan's economy into a dynamic competitor in the region and on the world market. Hence exports would increase, earnings generated, and job opportunities ensured.

The World Bank chief left with a very strong impression about Jordanians.

He said that these people are "very serious and hardworking", and have "maintained a sense of order and determination with the complex issue they have faced." Hence, he saw Jordanian society "poised for a new era of economic openness in which private initiative will assume a leading role."

After having talks with HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Prime Minister Kabir, ministers and other officials on the one hand, and the familiarization trips he

made to the poor districts in Aqaba, the Baqa'a refugee camp, and the Ghor agricultural areas, Mr Wolfensohn said "priority in the Kingdom was the creation of jobs, the spreading of the benefits of the economic program, and peace."

He added that this goal can be realized through allowing the poor "access to credit and income-generating activities."

Wolfensohn said that the openness of Jordan's economy has proven to the economic communities on the local, regional and international levels that it is a fertile place for investment and profitable projects. Therefore, the World Bank will continue to provide Jordan with technical assistance and financial resources, with a special emphasis on the priorities. The bank will concentrate with the Government on housing projects to create more jobs, and to offer securities which enable citizens to generate income resources.

Wolfensohn explained that as 50% of the population live in rural areas, agriculture can be developed for greater job opportunities. He also referred to the tourism sector as a vital source of employment.

The World Bank chief said the Bank will contribute to the mitigation of the sufferings of the disadvantaged and poor areas of Aqaba and Baqa'a. This can be achieved by the insurance of small business and necessary loans. Hence, Wolfensohn expressed the bank's



HRH Prince Hassan, the Regent, receives World Bank President Wolfensohn.

readiness to study the possibility of creating a special fund to lend craftsmen in refugees camps.

He also noted that positive experiences of other developing nations, such as the women's banks experiment, can be utilized to finance handicrafts projects for unemployed refugees.

Wolfensohn urged the Baqa'a inhabitants to build a hospital, especially as the land lot is available. He called upon them to renew the decaying water network in the camp, and to solve the population density (about 70,000 people live on a 1.4 square kilometer land space in the Baqa'a refugee camp). He reminded them of the need for the expansion

of schools, the reduction of classroom student numbers, and the treatment of solid waste.

On the eve of Mr Wolfensohn departure to the Palestinian areas, the World Bank in New York issued the following statement: Private firms in Jordan will soon have easier access to investment finance under a \$40 million export development loan approved by the World Bank. It seeks to support Jordan's Export Sector Development Program. The World Bank loan would help ease investment financing constraints for productive-capacity expansion, one of the major constraints faced by private firms in exploiting export opportunities. ■

World Bank classifies Jordan as a middle-income state

THE WORLD Bank categorizes Jordan as one of the Arab countries that has medium income (GNP per capita income exceeds \$1000 a year). The World Bank lists Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, and Mauritania as countries of low income. (GNP, per capita income is less than \$695 a year). Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Libya are classified as countries of high-medium income, whereas the UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait are placed as countries of high income.

The World Bank's report pointed to the unprecedented growth of the developing countries foreign debts, which amounted to \$1,945 billion at the end of '94 compared with \$1,812 billion in '93. It noted that instead of making a contribution to these countries' development, those debts became an additional means of depletion of the financial resources of the low and medium income states. Hence, their economic crises worsened.

The World Bank's report explains that as a result, the ratio of total debts to exports in

developing countries was 167%, and reaches 364% in low income states. It estimates that the latter group of countries need to increase their exports four times to be able to repay these debts and their services. The report points that the average ratio of debts services to total exports of the low income developing countries is 17% to 22%. In the Middle East and North Africa, the average ratio of debts to exports amounts to 153%, while the debt services to exports is about 16%.

The report incorporates a number of initiatives which the World Bank seeks to implement to mitigate the debt crisis and its negative impact on the inflow of foreign investments in these countries.

The World Bank called upon international institutions which finance the development processes in low income countries, as well as the creditor states to be flexible regarding debts rescheduling, and to recycle some of the funds to their industry so that the economic situation can be improved there. ■

Private sector relations between Jordan and Oman set to go

THE PRIVATE sectors in Jordan and Oman set up a \$10 million shareholding company. It will engage in agricultural, industrial, touristic, and health activities in both countries.

A Jordanian private sector delegation just came from Oman and said their visit was very successful.

In trade, the two sides agreed to promote, develop, and diversify the mechanisms of cooperation. The Jordanian side presented a draft trade accord between the two countries which include the cancellation of custom duties on all exchanged commodities of either country of origin, and

the removal of all restrictions and obstacles which hamper trade.

The two sides agreed to exchange the "calendar" lists of agricultural products, organize commercial exhibitions, and facilitate businessmen movement between the two countries.

The two sides discussed the possibilities of linking the stock markets with each other, to facilitate the enlisting of Jordanian companies in the Masqat Financial Market, and Omani companies on Amman Financial Market. This will encourage capital inflow in both countries. Meanwhile, it

will help both financial markets to further cooperate in the field of depositing, financing, settlement and clearance, exchange of experiences and information, planning in trading, and circulation interaction, etc.

The Omani side showed interest in Jordanian tourism, especially touristic rehabilitation and therapy touristic villages, and in training tourist guides.

They showed interest in Jordan's level of medical treatment. The Jordanian side expressed readiness to provide the health sector in the Sultanate with its needs of medical and nursing specialties.

The Jordanian side positively responded to the Omani request of having the Omani Commission for contracts and leasing teachers to come to Jordan in May instead of July every year. ■

MARKET WATCH

30 March-2 April

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle East Complex Hanah Minerals United Engineering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JEMCO Tajero Jordan Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amman Investment Bank Philadelpia Bank Zaria Education & Investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Union for Cigarettes National Slaughter house Jordan Dairy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle East Bank Philadelpia Bank Arab Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Int'l Education & Investment Middle East Development Bank Int'l Ceramic Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Financial Investment Arab Bank Housing Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal Metal Industries Der Al-Dawn for Development Jordan Industry Supplies
General Price Pointer	147,060	145,290	143,490
Trade Volume	498104	632051	722167
Stock Volume	268806	339563	453941
Highest Traded Stocks	103,380	94,930	179,395
Arab Bank	Arab Bank	Arab Bank	Arab Bank

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949

ABI brings 24 hour money transfer service to Jordan

By Mohammad Adawiya

SPECIAL TO THE STAR
THE AMMAN Bank for Investments (ABI) signed a number of sub-agent agreements last week with various local companies to bring round-the-clock money transfer service to Jordan.

At a signing ceremony at ABI's head office, the bank acting as agent for Western Union, a US-based company specializing in money transfers, authorized a number of local companies to act as its representatives. ABI is also in the process of adding other companies to the list of agents to provide convenient service to the local population.

The inclusion of two local currency exchangers as well as the Hijazi Hotel in Irbid adds to Western Union's nearly 29,000 offices worldwide. "Our plan is to spread the service throughout

Amman," Mr Hani Qaqish, Deputy General Manager of ABI said. With the addition of the hotel in Irbid there will be, "no need to wait for banks to open," he added.

Mr Qaqish, eager to highlight the advantages of the service, points out that it will provide for the "easy and quick transfer of cash." In addition to tourists, Mr Qaqish believes that students will also be among the potential customers likely to take advantage of the service. Citing the large number of families who live in the Gulf area but whose children attend Jordanian universities, Mr Qaqish believes that such a service can be of tremendous help in dealing with the logistics such a situation poses. The bank is also optimistic that the large number of foreign workers, who regularly send money back to their home countries, will

also take advantage of the service.

Although ABI is the main agent in Jordan, the bank executive is quick to point out that there is no need to have a bank account to transfer money. The bank charges a service fee, however, charging \$15 for the minimum transferable amount of \$100 and increasing thereafter. Realizing that the fee might be somewhat high, Mr Qaqish says, "We are trying...to reduce this fee."

Although the recent additions of companies such as the Arab Center for Exchange and the Saleh Exchange Co., help to bring accessibility to the local population, most agree that further locations are needed. With the possible additions of supermarkets such as Safeway, and other hotels, ABI hopes to provide truly convenient 24 hour service. ■



Quality is the hallmark of ARAMEX services

ARAMEX WAS established in 1982 with a single wholesale counter route between Amman and New York. Today, more than 900 people work in 59 ARAMEX offices in 26 countries around the world.

In addition, ARAMEX has a presence in every country around the world through its global alliance, the Overseas Express Carriers (OEC). The OEC is linked through an on-line electronic network which enables each member to track shipments around the globe, as well as communicate via electronic mail. "We can track and trace shipments 24 hours a day," explains Osama Fattaleh Jordan Country Manager, adding "our ability to give customers accurate shipment information on-demand, is a powerful competitive advantage."

ARAMEX has also developed an alliance with SITA, the international telecommunications company to link its international tracking and tracing system.

ARAMEX offers a variety of distribution and information services, including express, cargo and logistics services for wholesale and retail clients. ARAMEX's Express Division offers rapid document and parcel delivery to any destination

in the world. The ARAMEX Cargo System provides door-to-door or airport-to-door freight delivery, including packing, crating and customs clearance.

The ARAMEX Special Service Division is a particularly strong example, what began as a special favor for a client has turned into a growing venture. Because of their existing distribution and information network, ARAMEX stations can purchase and deliver items such as spare parts or medical

delivery.

ARAMEX now has a site of its own on the Internet for the world to access. "We are excited to offer our customers the best in service and the latest in technology," says President and CEO Fadi Ghandour, adding that "...the creation of the ARAMEX Web site reflects our commitment to providing the corporate market with a complete solution, satisfying customer needs..." In the fast-moving global, competitive business environment of today, it is crucial that current information is available to the customer who requires it.

With the Internet expanding, ARAMEX is utilizing it for its real purpose, to facilitate and ease the delivery of information and in this case, it is to our valued customers. The ARAMEX Web site address is <http://www.aramex.com>

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ARAMEX
It's A Small World.

Shipping industry doubtful about return to pre-Gulf War prosperity

By Mohammad Adawiya
Special to The Star

JUST OVER five years after the end of the Gulf War, the shipping industry is still feeling its effects. International sanctions against Iraq, a chief market for Jordanian goods and a principal source of shipping business, have jeopardized the continued prosperity of the once thriving Port of Aqaba. With the possible limited lifting of the embargo on the horizon, however, Jordan's shipping industry is doubtful that it will be business as usual any time soon.

Jordan's strategic geographical location, serving as a crossroads between the Middle East, Africa, the Mediterranean Sea and the European continent has served the Port of Aqaba well, over its 57 year history. Experiencing a sharp increase in activity over the past 15 years, the port's activity peaked in 1988 serving over 2,500 ships and handling some 20 million tons of cargo. The eruption of the Gulf crisis in 1990, however, and the subsequent sanctions placed on Iraq, as well as the blockade of the Port of Aqaba has significantly affected this activity.

"Aqaba was more of an Iraqi port," states Mr. Tawfiq Kassar, chairman of Amin Kassar & Sons (AKS), a transport and shipping company founded in Jordan in 1955.

Port activity, as Mr. Kassar points out, is "101% linked to Iraq." In 1989, for example, a full year prior to the Gulf crisis, the port handled approximately 10 million tons of exports; of that amount, Mr. Kassar explains that 71% were goods for Iraq. Comparing before and after activity however, he believes a significant transformation has taken place. "Since the embargo, Iraqi cargo doesn't exceed 20 percent of the 1989 figures," Kassar notes; the majority of which, he adds, consists of foodstuffs.

Unfortunately, the industry's future is also "not very encouraging" as the chairman of AKS points out. He cites increased competition from other neighboring ports as one reason for the gloomy outlook. Israeli ports including Haifa, as well as ports such as Beirut and Latakia in Syria promise to divert future traffic away from Aqaba. In addition, the shipping company executive cites the limited nature of the possible oil-for-food plan currently being negotiated between Iraq and the United Nations as another reason for concern. Explaining that under the plan, Iraqi port activity is only expected to account for approximately \$2 billion worth of mainly foodstuffs every six months—from a once \$10 billion annually—Mr. Kassar expressed doubt about the

return to any semblance of past port activity any time in the near future.

The picture is not entirely gloomy however. As Mr. Kassar is quick to point out, there are a few points still in Aqaba's favor. Kassar points to the fact that canal dues and generally higher port charges elsewhere, makes Aqaba an attractive port. Another reason for Mr. Kassar's cautious optimism is the possible influx of cruise ships into the port in light of the revitalized tourism industry. With annual ferry passenger activity in 1989 at approximately 700,000, climbing to about 1.3 million in 1994 and projected to reach roughly 1.5 million before the year 2000, cruise ships are quickly being seen as a possible way of dealing with the void Iraq left behind. A tangible result of this, he points out, is Monday's arrival in Aqaba of the new Oriana, the most modern cruise ship floating today.

Also working in Aqaba's favor, is the continued support of Jordan's major industries as a significant source of activity for the ports. Phosphate, polish and fertilizers, for example, account for about 80% of total export commodities at the port of Aqaba.

Mr. Kassar does however warn of possible hitches. He cites Ministry of Tourism regulations permitting only 800 of the Oriana's 2,000 passengers to visit Petra as possibly eventually hurting this newly found port business. This, along with the high land transport



costs associated with visiting Israel from Jordan, may make Aqaba, at best, a limited market for cruise liners.

With the Gulf War a distant memory for most of the world, Jordan, realizing that its shipping and trading activities are inescapably linked to Iraq, continues to be harmed by its outcome. The dramatic rise in port activity prior to the Gulf crisis and the subsequent fall

in its aftermath points to this unavoidable conclusion. Jordan's lifeline to the sea, the Port of Aqaba has been feeling the ill effects of the war ever since its conclusion. With no meaningful end in sight to UN sanctions against Iraq, some are doubtful whether these effects will ever subside. ■

Islamic insurance drives a wedge in market

YET ANOTHER insurance company was set up. However, this is different from the insurance companies that exist in Jordan because it operates on Islamic basis. The new Islamic Insurance Co. has a paid-up capital of two million dollars.

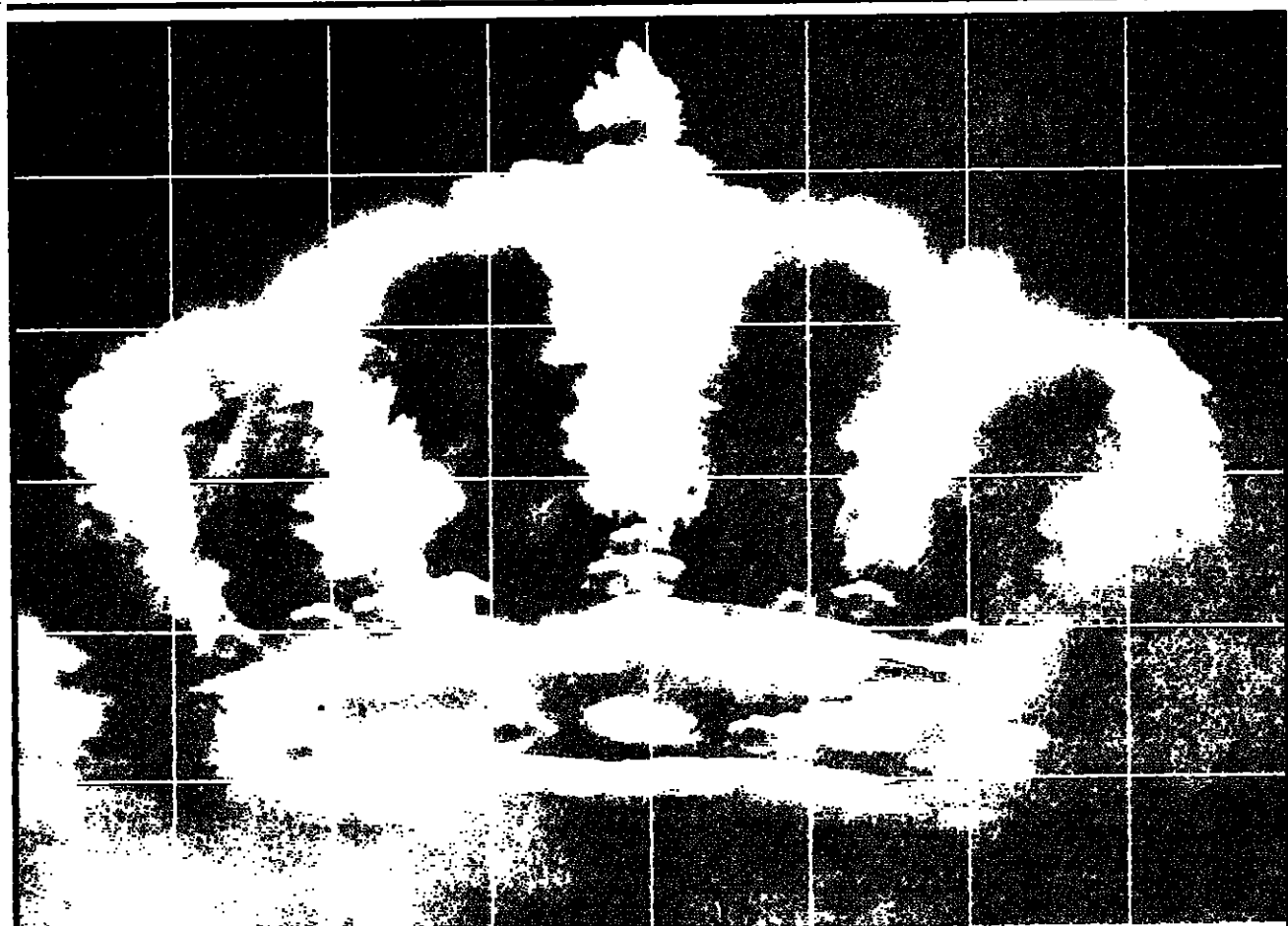
The head of the founding committee of the company, Mr. Musa Sh'habdi said the setting up of such a firm based on Islamic principles has been long over due. But he added the amended insurance law of 1995 made the company possible.

He continued that the company will deal with every type of insurance and will apply the cooperative principle so that the person who is insured will get the maximum benefit.

Jordan Islamic Bank is a major shareholder in the insurance company. Mr. Sh'habdi believes that many people shy away from traditional insurance and what this company does is provide something new in line with Islamic rules.

He said that the Islamic Bank started to provide insurance services since 1994. However it was on a small scale and only for its clients.

What is interesting about this company is that it accepts non-Muslim shareholders. Besides the Islamic Bank, other companies constitute the majority of its shareholders. These include: Amla Investment Co., the Islamic-Arab Insurance Co., and the Real Estate Investment Co. ■



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Arab-German ensure cooperation

INSURANCE COMPANIES are prospering. While the number of companies for the past 11 years has been constant at 17, now, the latest is the Arab-German Insurance Co. In addition to two other companies which have been set up recently, the Jordan International Co., at JD 4 million and the Amman Insurance Co., at a JD 2 million. These three have a total capital of JD 11 million. The Arab-German Insurance Co. is the first to have foreign

shareholding. With Swedish, German and Cypriot investors, it has shareholders from Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iraq.

The head of the company is Mr Issa Al Rimoni, a businessman and a former deputy. He says that the new company is a compilation of investors that intends to create a new regional insurance market based in Jordan.

Mr Rimoni stressed that the company will not seek to compete with the other insurance

companies, however it will seek to provide a different service. He didn't elaborate on but stated that it will benefit the national economy.

Despite the increasing number of insurance companies in Jordan, Mr Rimoni feels that the peace process has created lots of opportunities for a regional insurance market.

Something which Arab-German insurance intends to fulfill.



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Selected recommendations for loss prevention

By Ziad Abujaber,
United Insurance Co. LTD

MOST BASIC rules for loss prevention are equally applicable to almost all machines and technical equipment. Therefore generally valid points of view and possibilities for loss prevention are summarized.

Loss prevention outside the influence of the user

Loss prevention of course starts in the manufacturers works. This includes loss prevention during planning and construction. Loss prevention is important for the materials selection, the planning for maintenance and servicing as well as for transportation, storage, assembly, commissioning and test runs. It has to include the actual transportation and erection and assembly at site as well as final test operation. Loss prevention at the site of erection or assembly has to include the safeguarding against theft and safety measures against fire.

The client for insurance of construction machinery and equipment is in most cases the user of this machinery and equipment. The user has nearly almost no influence on the manufacturers loss prevention measures.

Also for an insurer it is more difficult to discuss loss prevention measures with a third party which is not his client, unless he is highly reputed and well known as an authority in this field. Therefore we should leave this subject now and come to the more practicable part for most of us.

Loss prevention by the user

Often a component or a machine is subjected to additional stresses (overloads, corrosion, erosion, etc.) which have not been taken into account during planning, calculation and design. The result is that the anticipated lifetime can be greatly reduced. Numerous preventive measures make it possible for the user to protect the installation from such additional stresses to maintain operating efficiency during its useful life. This includes recognizing and replacing parts liable to damage in good time. Expenditure for loss prevention

always should be weighed against its effectiveness, and an optimum value should be established.

The first duties of the user in connection with loss prevention arise before acceptance of the installation or machine and involve ensuring all necessary conditions for operation of the plant are satisfied, such as available space, energy supply, illumination, ventilation and noise suppression.

Maintenance and inspection schemes should always form part of the delivery specifications. The question of spare parts must also be clarified at an early stage, and orders for spare parts must be placed. There must be always a complete list of spare parts available.

Loss prevention measures should be applied in relation to operation, supervision, maintenance and repair and of course the installation. If machines are out of operation for long periods, special inhibiting measures must be taken.

The personnel responsible for operating machines should be regularly informed and advised of the content and application of operating instructions. Their attention should be drawn to the signifi-



Abujaber

operational records are valueless unless they are evaluated constantly by adequately trained personnel who are in a position to initiate suitable counter measures immediately.

All supervisory equipment must be checked on a rotational basis for proper functioning and adjustment. Measuring instruments or protective devices which have been found on several occasions to be responsible for incorrect readings, false alarms or faulty trip-

record all maintenance work in machine cards or log-books.

The purpose of inspection is to check parts of a machine without major dismantling. As a rule, inspection is effected by visual observations with or without technical aids. The use of specialized test and measuring equipment has made it possible in recent years to widen substantially the scope and meaningfulness of inspections.

Careful inspection before scheduled overhauls makes it possible to spot defects and hence to order important replacement parts in good time. In this way, any extension of the time for overhaul, resulting from delayed delivery of replacement parts, can be avoided.

The scheduled overhaul of a machine in a disassembled condition, apart from routine maintenance work, constitutes the oldest and best known method of loss prevention. The overhaul of a machine or plant entails a scheduled shutdown at a time when the effects of non-operation are as small as possible; it should prevent unforeseen outages at an unfavorable time with great losses in production.

The success of an overhaul depends to a large extent on whether all faulty components that can lead to damage are recognized and eliminated. For this purpose, it is necessary to know the possible weak points of the machine. It is therefore always recommended that consultations should be made with the manufacturer and the technical insurer, whose special task is to find weak points, damages and causes.

Every case of damage that has occurred indicates an existing weakness in the installation of the constructional component affected. When carrying out repairs, every effort must therefore be directed towards eliminating weak points so as to avoid the repetition of the damage. In this regard, the most important prerequisite is an exact knowledge of the cause of damage, making it necessary to analyze carefully the phases of damage and their effects; only on the basis of the results of this analysis, will it be possible to decide, from a technical aspect, in which way

repairs must be effected, i.e.:

■ By replacing the damaged part of the structure or plant by a similar part or

■ By mending the damaged component and, in certain circumstances, introducing improvements at the same time.

The use of spare parts is always to be preferred in cases where recourse can be made to a suitable spare-parts store-be it at the user's or manufacturer's premises—and where economical advantage can be gained by savings in cost and time. At the same time, it is absolutely essential to ensure that the cause of damage—with the exception of accidental faults in the materials—does not lie in the very component to be replaced (faults in design and calculation, incorrect material, etc.). When repairing and installing the relevant protective devices, the interlocking circuits must be checked and, if the need arises, changed or complemented. By using more suitable auxiliary materials (lubricants, coolants, etc.) a repetition of the damage may also be prevented.

If the cause of damage is a fault on the part of the operator, better training of personnel is often not enough; operating and maintenance instructions should be examined to see whether they can be made clearer and more to the point.

Preference should be given to the repair of a damaged component in cases:

■ Where the requisition of a replacement part entails a substantially larger expenditure in time and/or money as required for the repair.

■ Where improvements in design and materials can be made in case of repair—a possibility which would not exist when fitting spare parts.

Before each repair, the area adjacent to the location of damage must first be examined for cracks, material faults or detrimental structural changes. If nothing objectionable is found, the stresses in the component, which, after all, have led to failure, must be investigated with regard to their magnitude and type.

From these guidelines for loss prevention, it is evidently clear that the one with more to lose is the client and not the insurance company.

The down-time and headaches, needless to say financial losses are more of a burden than the loss prevention and in no way will the insurance company alleviate this burden of the clients' shoulders... so start loss preventing now..... ■

An obligatory maintenance schedule and trained personnel must be available for all maintenance works. The time intervals have to be fixed by recommendations of the manufacturer and on the basis of experience of the user

cance and effects of mishandling or faulty operation. The demonstration of actual cases, are of great value in such training sessions.

The supervision of the operation of machines forms a substantial part of loss prevention. Supervision can be effected by personnel and/or by automatic measuring and control devices. When supervision is carried out by personnel only, gradual change in technical operational parameters are particularly dangerous because, as distinct from sudden changes, they often remain unrecognized. This problem can be overcome by applying markings to measuring instruments, making lists of limiting values, and by visual or audible warnings. All

ping are regarded by personnel as being unreliable, they may well be ignored when they operate correctly in the event of a real emergency. Such unreliable devices must be replaced immediately or properly adjusted.

Even the best machine under maximum operating conditions needs regular maintenance, inspections, overhauls and repairs. The object of maintenance is to keep equipment in good order and provide it with auxiliary materials. An obligatory maintenance schedule and trained personnel must be available for all maintenance works. The time intervals have to be fixed by recommendations of the manufacturer and on the basis of experience of the user. It is highly recommendable to

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■ IN 1995 one in three tons of airfreight moved through an airport handling more than a million tons a year—with a good chance it was a United States airport.

This snapshot of air cargo activity in 1995 shows a continuation of healthy, steady global growth, according to airport industry body Airports Council International (ACI).

Some 45 million tons of cargo moved through 441 airports in ACI's six global regions in 1995, up 6.1 percent on 1994's total, capping a steady four-year growth spurt, reveals Paul Behnke, ACI Director of Economics.

However, growth in the passenger business is a trend that could have serious implications for the basic provision of air cargo facilities throughout the next decade.

A key to air cargo's airport's future lies with the passenger side of the air equation. Its predicted growth—providing as it does the bulk of air cargo in the bellyhold of passenger aircraft—does have implications on the future of airfreight provision.

"This is the fourth year in a row of strong all-round growth," Behnke says.

"If growth continues at this rate, passenger traffic will double in 12 years!"

"This means that by 2007, airports will have to handle more than four billion passengers."

This has clear implications of airport congestion and reduced efficiency.

"Preparing for this increase is a tremendous undertaking and to meet the challenges airports will need to build new infrastructure and maximize the use of existing facilities by the use of new technology. ■

Air Cargo News

Palestine Post

Edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Hilo for Knesset

● The first Arab woman deputy could be in the Knesset sooner than most Israelis think. Nadia Al Hilo has just become favorite in the first primary held by the Labor Party. She came 37 under a party list. Al Hilo, who is 42 years old, is a Christian from Heifa. She said that the result of the primary was a landmark. In addition to that, Al Hilo is one of three Arab candidates fighting for Labor in the 28 May elections.

Palestinian residence in Jerusalem: Sinister campaign

● Israel has embarked on a sinister campaign to cancel the residence permits of Palestinians living in Jerusalem. Tel Aviv is planning to limit Palestinian residents in that city just before the final status negotiations on Jerusalem starts. Mr Ahmed Al Ruwadi, a legal advisor to an Israeli human rights organization says that they have received 30 complaints from Palestinians who said that the Israeli Ministry of Interior has confiscated their identity cards which proves that they reside in Jerusalem.

Mr Ruwadi said that other human rights organizations have received the same complaints. He added that "the issue is purely political." He continued that Israel is on the point of the final status negotiations and it wants to limit the number of Palestinians in the city. This was denied by Israel. A spokesman of the Interior Ministry said that according to the law, anybody who stays more than seven years outside Jerusalem will have his identity card withdrawn.

The annual pilgrimage

● About 7000 pilgrims from the areas controlled by the Palestine National Authority will perform the annual Hajj. In addition to that, 2670 from the 1948 territories will also go to the annual pilgrimage. These pilgrims will start arriving in Jordan by 14 April. Most of their passports are now in the hands of the Jordanian authorities which will take them to the Saudi Embassy in Amman to be stamped. Saudi Arabia said it will accept about 10,000 pilgrims from the West Bank and Gaza alone. These Palestinians will be travelling on passports issued by the Palestine National Authority. The last date for them to enter Saudi Arabia is 17 April. This is the first time that Saudi Arabia recognizes the passports issued by the PNA. The cost of the pilgrimage for each individual is estimated by the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf as JD 623.

Dimona: Another leak?

● The Dimona nuclear reactor has been the subject of yet another controversy. Israeli television suggested that nuclear waste was not being stored in proper containers and subject to leakage. This news sent the Israeli government scurrying. In a message to HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, the Israeli Environment Minister Mr Yossi Sarid said there was no truth in the television report. He added that there was no leakage whatsoever, and that his ministry monitors the radiation levels regularly to make sure that no damage affects the environment.



Sarid

However, Sarid's statement failed to appease regional jitters. Syria, Lebanon and Egypt consider the possible leak in Dimona as a dangerous threat to the area.

A bigger slice of the cake

● A report by the American Embassy in Tel Aviv suggests that political reconciliation between the Palestinians and Israel has paved the way for expanded US business in the West Bank and Gaza. Although the report was made in July 1995, it still holds good despite the worsening political situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The report says that the best manufacturing export opportunities for US companies exist in the sale of power, telecommunications, construction, refurbished factory and export equipment to support infrastructure and commercial development over the next five years. The report says that a \$2.4 billion has been pledged by the donor country over a five-year period between 1994-1999. The report says it is essential for US companies to get a bigger slice of the cake.

Egypt takes on a new image

Islamic militancy appears to recede according to some western diplomats

By John Lancaster

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

CAIRO—Islamic militancy appears to have receded as a threat to pro-Western regimes in Egypt and several other Muslim countries, stirring debate among diplomats and analysts over whether the tide has crested.

Explanations include successful efforts by government security forces to penetrate and crush militant groups; public revulsion over the violent methods of some Islamic extremists; growing disillusionment with the example set by struggling Islamic regimes in Iran and Sudan; and an improving atmosphere in Arab-Israeli relations.

The turnaround is especially striking in Egypt. President Hosni Mubarak's secular, military-backed government was rocked by Islamic militant attacks on government officials and foreigners from 1992 through the middle of last year. But after a brutal security campaign including tens of thousands of arrests, calm has returned to the capital and tourists again are crowding the Giza pyramids and other ancient monuments.

"The movement is contracting," said Walid Kazziha, a professor of political science at the American University of Cairo. "It is besieged internationally and regionally. Most of the governments are standing against it."

Perhaps it is just a temporary lull. Palestinian suicide bombers continue to wreak havoc in Israel, and extremist violence recently made its debut in Saudi Arabia, long seen as an island of tranquility in the turbulent Middle East. There is little doubt, moreover, that in Egypt as elsewhere in the Muslim world, Islam remains a powerful force affecting social and political change, from the content of television soap operas to styles of dress.

But due to a confluence of factors—including the containment of violence in Egypt, the gradual return of political stability to Algeria and the integration of Islamic zealots into the political mainstream of Jordan and Lebanon, among other places—diplomats and analysts have begun to ask whether the tide of Islamic militancy of the last 25 years has crested.

That was also the question put to British diplomats last year in a cable from the Near East and North Africa division of the British Foreign Office. The overwhelming majority—including embassies in Egypt, Algeria and Syria—

answered yes, according to diplomatic sources.

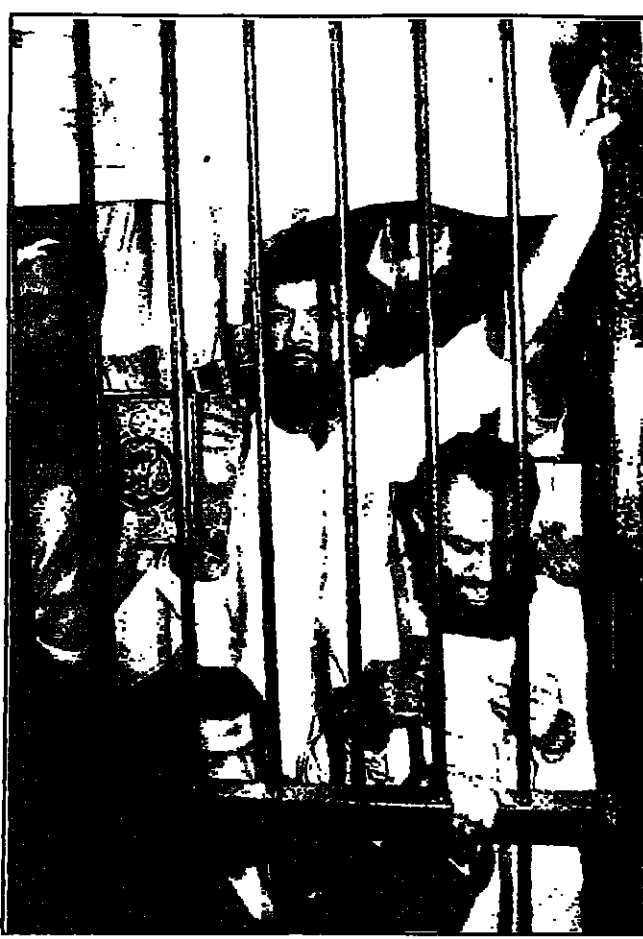
The query was prompted by last November's Algerian elections, in which the secular, military-backed regime of President Liamine Zerrouk won an overwhelming victory, these sources said. The results have been widely interpreted as signaling public rejection of the civil war between government forces and Islamic militants that has claimed up to 50,000 lives.

With a billion adherents worldwide, Islam is the second-largest religion and, since the collapse of communism, arguably "the most pervasive and powerful transnational force in the world," writes John Esposito, an Islam specialist at Georgetown University. Muslims constitute majorities in roughly 45 countries, from Asia to Africa to the Middle East.

Islam emerged as a powerful political force in the 1970s and 1980s. Causes range from the failures of Arab nationalism—crystallized by Israel's crushing victory over Arab countries in the 1967 Middle East War—to public anxiety over the erosion of traditional Islamic values by Western culture. The effects can be witnessed on the streets of any Arab capital, where mosques often overflow with crowds at prayer time and many women have taken to wearing the *hejab*, or Muslim headscarf.

At its most extreme, the Islamic fundamentalist revival has manifested itself in political upheaval, such as the 1979 Iranian revolution, or the 1981 assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and the 1993 bombing of New York City's World Trade Center by Egyptian militants.

Haunted by memories of Iran, Western policy makers have watched with trepidation as militant movements bloomed in Egypt and Algeria.



Memories of imprisonment of Islamic militants in Egypt. The movement is contracting say experts.

They feared that friendly regimes in those countries could topple like so many dominoes. Harvard political theorist Samuel Huntington has warned of a coming "clash of civilizations" that would supplant the ideological rivalries of the Cold War.

As the Arab world's most populous country and a key strategic ally of the United States, Egypt has long been the focus of particular con-

cern. But so far the country has defied predictions of imminent catastrophe. After the arrest of thousands of suspected militants, at least 12,000 of whom remain in jail, militant violence largely has been confined to rural villages in the Nile Valley—or to occasional, high-profile attacks abroad, such as last June's attempted assassination of Mubarak in Ethiopia.

Signs of government confidence abound. Curfews have been lifted in villages. And with the militant violence under control, the government has turned its attention to Egypt's largest opposition group, the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, which is weighted heavily toward urban intellectuals and professionals and officially eschews violence.

Fears of a new Islamic backlash, meanwhile, have failed so far to materialize. Instead of taking to the streets, some Brotherhood members have moved in the opposite direction, trying in recent months to establish a legal, secular political party to include Christians.

"We align with Christians, with Jews, with everyone," said Abu Ela Madi, a 38-year-old engineer and Brotherhood activist who heads the breakaway group. "We find the distance between us is not great. We must be moderate. We accept pluralism."

Cairo's victory is far from secure. Despite renewed promises of economic reform, the government has not yet been able to ease the unemployment and grinding poverty that fuel Islamic militancy. Some warn that it is only a matter of time before the militants regroup.

"The danger that is coming is much worse than what is in the past," said Mukhtar Nohh, a prominent Brotherhood figure and criminal defense attorney who serves as treasurer of a professional union for Egyptian lawyers. "What the state has done is put terrorism in boxes and stored it for another time."

In the absence of militant violence, Islam remains a powerful and unifying ideology for much of the Muslim world. Many Egyptians abhor the militants' methods but support their goal of Islamic rule. Similarly, in Turkey, the populist Islamic Welfare Party won a plurality in December's parliamentary elections.

"Right now in Egypt, the Islamic trend is less active now than a couple of years ago in many ways," said a Western diplomat. "But the salience of Islam as a motivating source of ideology ... is not at all diminished."

By Thomas W. Lippman

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

WASHINGTON—The upbeat solidarity that marked the March 13 anti-terrorism summit conference in Egypt had given way to palpable edginess by the time delegates from 27 countries convened at the State Department last Thursday night to discuss implementation of the summit resolutions.

Arab delegates, supported by some European participants, were complaining the agenda was one-sided, focused only on terrorism against Israelis by Palestinian extremists and ignoring what they saw as unfair and provocative Israeli retaliation that imposed collective punishment on the Palestinians.

Arab diplomats and visiting Arab officials said Israel's closure of its borders with the West Bank and Gaza Strip was contributing to extremism by depriving tens of thousands of Palestinians of their livelihood. They complained that Israel's practice of blowing up the homes of suspected terrorists' families fueled anti-Israeli sentiment. They wanted the conference to address these issues, not just methods of combating suicide bombers from the militant group Hamas.

By the time the conference ended Friday afternoon, how-

ever, much of the goodwill appeared to have been restored. Prodded by Egypt, France and other participants, the United States broadened the agenda to include the plight of the Palestinians and terrorism throughout the region, not just attacks on Israelis.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher also announced a new US-brokered plan to expand international economic assistance to the Palestinians. Arab participants declared themselves placated, if not fully satisfied, and agreed to submit formal recommendations on the entire range of issues to be considered at a foreign ministers' meeting, probably 22 April in Luxembourg.

"This ended up being a very balanced conference," said Egyptian ambassador Ahmed Maher el-Sayed. "Yesterday I was a bit worried but we managed to put the conference on the right track with a balanced discussion, not just the agenda of one party."

Saeb Erakat, the chief Palestinian delegate, told Arab reporters he was moderately encouraged by the changed tone, although he said the Palestinians did not get everything they were seeking.

The transformation of the atmosphere began when Christopher announced last Thursday evening that he, Israeli Prime

Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat had agreed on "an emergency plan designed to improve the economic situation in Gaza and the West Bank."

In announcing the agreement, which includes a partial reopening of Israel's borders to commercial Palestinian traffic, Christopher said, "We must find a way to support the Palestinian people as they too suffer the consequences of Hamas bombings."

That, Arab delegates said, was the first US statement of recognition that the aftermath of the bombings has caused hardship for Palestinians as well as Israelis.

At last Friday's working session, participants said, Palestinian delegates delivered what one official called "some dramatic descriptions of what the conditions are in the West Bank and Gaza—not in a way to cause confrontation, but to emphasize the urgency of finding solutions."

The measures announced by Christopher, such as increas-

ing the number of trucks allowed to carry building materials into Gaza, failed to resolve the basic contradiction facing the conference: How to improve the lives of the Palestinians and increase their stake in peace while hundreds of thousands of them have been deprived of their livelihoods by the measures Israel has taken to protect itself from the suicide bombers.

Japan, for example, came to the follow-up conference prepared to contribute \$10 million to a "job creation fund" for the Palestinians; but Japanese officials acknowledged the paradox of doing that while the Palestinians cannot get to jobs they already have.

Plans call for foreign ministers of the participating countries to gather to carry out recommendations on such subjects as increased police cooperation, revised extradition procedures, training of counterterrorism personnel and curtailing traffic in forged or stolen documents.

The measures announced by Christopher, such as increas-

Attention to Palestinian problems turns Mideast meetings upbeat



Palestinians at the Erez Point demonstrate against the continuing closure of Gaza by Israel. They are flanked by a PNA policeman.

Student protesters blame Israel for Palestinian police raid

By Marjorie Miller

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

NABLUS, West Bank—The hundreds of police officers who stormed a rally at Al Najah University last week were very clearly Palestinians under the authority of Yasser Arafat. But the students striking in protest here last Monday blamed the raid on Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Peres is pushing Arafat to crack down on the militant Islamic movement Hamas for the four suicide bombings that killed more than 60 people in Israel a month ago, the students said, so Arafat is cracking down on the university, which he considers a Hamas stronghold. "You have to ask who this action serves," said Omar Dhaher, a 20-year-old engineering student. "Well, it is against us

and it serves Israel. We need the Palestinian Authority to support us, not to enter our university and practice violence against students."

A month ago, Palestinians across the West Bank and Gaza Strip lashed out at Hamas for the suicide bombings, saying the violence threatens peace negotiations with Israel. Today, after police raids, Israel's destruction of the homes of suicide bombers, the Israeli closure of the West Bank and Gaza and other measures, Palestinians have forgotten about Hamas' bombs and are once again directing their anger at Israel.

Faced with upcoming elections, Peres is punishing all Palestinian supporters of peace for the acts of a few violent opponents, they say. As a result, life under the autonomous Palestinian Authority currently looks a lot like life under the Israeli occupation. The growing anger apparently has not yet turned into outright opposition to the peace process, as most Palestinians still want to go ahead with negotiations for a final peace agreement that are supposed to begin in May. But the frustration

appears to be eroding support for Israel's partner in peace—Arafat.

The Palestinian leader is perceived to be doing Israel's dirty work, and his actions are causing fear of civil strife among Palestinians. "People are in a state of shock because our own police attacked the students in the university," said Zuhair Dubie, editor of the weekly newspaper *The Nabulus*. "I view this as a very dangerous step. The Israelis are pressuring the Palestinian Authority to do this, and the Palestinian Authority is pressuring the people. But we're solving a problem with a problem, and the most dangerous problem would be internal conflict," he said.

Since the bombings, Arafat has rounded up hundreds of suspected Islamic militants under pressure from Israel and the United States to break Hamas' political wing and social-welfare structure, as well as its military wing. The rally at Al-Najah last Saturday was held to demand the release of scores of Nabulus students and professors who are among those detained by Palestinian police.

While Arafat's Fatah organization has the biggest bloc of support on campus, Hamas controls the university's student council through an alliance with another group that opposes the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords. Political observers believe Arafat was trying to send a warning to Hamas activists with the raid.

According to the students, police violated an unwritten rule against entering the universities—they said Israel never sent troops into Al Najah during the 29-year occupation—and broke up the rally by firing bullets into the air and tear gas and clubbing students. Several were hospitalized.

The action came on the heels of Israel's arrest last week of about 400 Palestinian students at Bir Zeit University, in a West Bank area still under Israeli control. That was the largest Israeli police round up since the signing of the first peace accord in September 1993.

Israel said they detained suspected Hamas activists and students from Gaza who had failed to heed orders to leave the West Bank.

On Monday, about 2,000 Bir



Students at Al Najah university are dispersed by Palestinian police

Zeit University students demonstrated outside the police station there in support of their fellow students from Nabulus. After the rally, some of the protesters threw rocks from an overpass at Israeli cars, provoking a clash with Israeli troops, who fired tear gas to disperse the crowd.

In another demonstration at the main Israel-Gaza border crossing, about 200 Palestinian children protested the closure, carrying olive branches and signs reading: "Please allow my dad to work."

After the current wave of

suicide bombings began 25 February, Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza, preventing about 60,000 Palestinians from entering Israel to work each day and blocking trade between Israel and the Palestinians.

Israeli officials said on Monday they would ease the ban on workers to let 3,000 Gazans work on farms in Israel's Negev desert near Gaza. All of the workers must be over the age of 45 and married with families—a category that Israel believes reduces the security risk.

The economic impact of the closure has been devastating for most Palestinian businesses and families. In Nabulus, for example, employment has dropped from 67 percent in October 1995 to 24 percent in mid-March, when Palestinians were not even allowed to go to jobs in West Bank Jewish settlements.

While most families have less money to spend, the cost of basic foods have shot up by as much as 500 percent with supplies limited by the closure.

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A special section offering
fresh perspectives on
global issues prepared for
The Star

THE WORLD PAPER

PRINTED IN FIVE LANGUAGES
ON FIVE CONTINENTS



From Belfast to Havana, the revolutionaries fight change

By Crocker Snow Jr.

AT THE TAIL END of 1995, there was the smell of eternal spring in the air. Five years after the end of the Cold War, all the little ugly ducklings of international relations were beginning to pretty themselves up.

Whether it was the emergent Palestinian homeland in the West Bank and Gaza, gentrification of Havana based on the promise of the end of the long US trade embargo, the settling in of the cease fire in Northern Ireland or the growth of trade and even direct air travel between Beijing and Taipei, the tide of conflict and confrontation was ebbing.

Not for long. The tide has turned this year, spawning untidy, unpredictable currents. In a matter of weeks the promising pattern of international affairs has blossomed in London and Jerusalem, with innocent commuters torn apart and terrorized. Military maneuvering has become the order of the day in the Formosa Straits and the Straits of Florida. The profession (not act) of diplomacy has reclaimed its gumball adjective—and the world is neither a better nor a safer place.

Taken together, does all this spell a major change, casting a geopolitical pall on the last years of the century? Or, in the jargon of the money managers who exercise growing sway on the world, do recent events represent a mere "market correction?"

"Think in market terms and patterns. The forces in place are, at the 11th hour, threatened with losing

their pride of place and the very cause for which they are fighting. Rather than revolutionary, they are reactionary and recalcitrant.

In Northern Ireland, the IRA has a vested interest in clandestine armed activity. Many of its members would turn into James Dean-like rebels without a cause if the peace talks with Westminster—supported now even by Gerry Adams and Sinn Féin—prevail. So as the day of a peaceful accommodation approaches, the IRA blasts become more desperate and aberrational and more likely to prevent the very thing its members want—respectability.

The mirror image of Gerry Adams as the reformed terrorist is Yasser Arafat of the PLO. The born-again realist who is the figurehead of the new Palestine, Arafat is under as much pressure from the Jews today as ever; but not to end his ways so much as to control the radical Hamas and Islamic Jihad suicide bombers who recently were his allies. Like Sinn Féin, the threat to the PLO comes from its own extremes, not its longtime protagonist. Both groups are reaping the hate, distrust and fanaticism they sowed.

This is little solace for Israelis. They are humbled by being on a wartime footing once again, struggling with demons of the past while prepar-

ing for a national election. Many Arabs are humiliated, unable to assure the painful peace process, unwilling to root-out its fanatical opponents. But none has thrown in the towel. The prevailing ennui and exhaustion about the unsettled years past is stronger than the revulsion about the present. This is the important point.

The Cuban case has a different spin. Fidel Castro has been floating trial balloons after trial balloons into the Caribbean trade winds in search of rapprochement with the US. He celebrated the 50th anniversary of the UN in New York, mixing bows in the public spotlight with private receptions to woo US bankers and businesspeople. More than 90 US firms have opened

representative offices in Havana.

As the influx of US business and dollars becomes more apparent, the threat to the Cuban cartel does too. In February, a visiting European human rights group was rebuffed. The Miami-based, anti-Castro Brothers to the Rescue, provocative as their actions have been, witnessed two of their small planes blasted from international skies by Cuban fighter jets. Thus did Castro and his praetorian guard achieve instant solidarity by creating an external military threat.

One American businessman, a member of the last US congressional delegation to visit Havana in January,

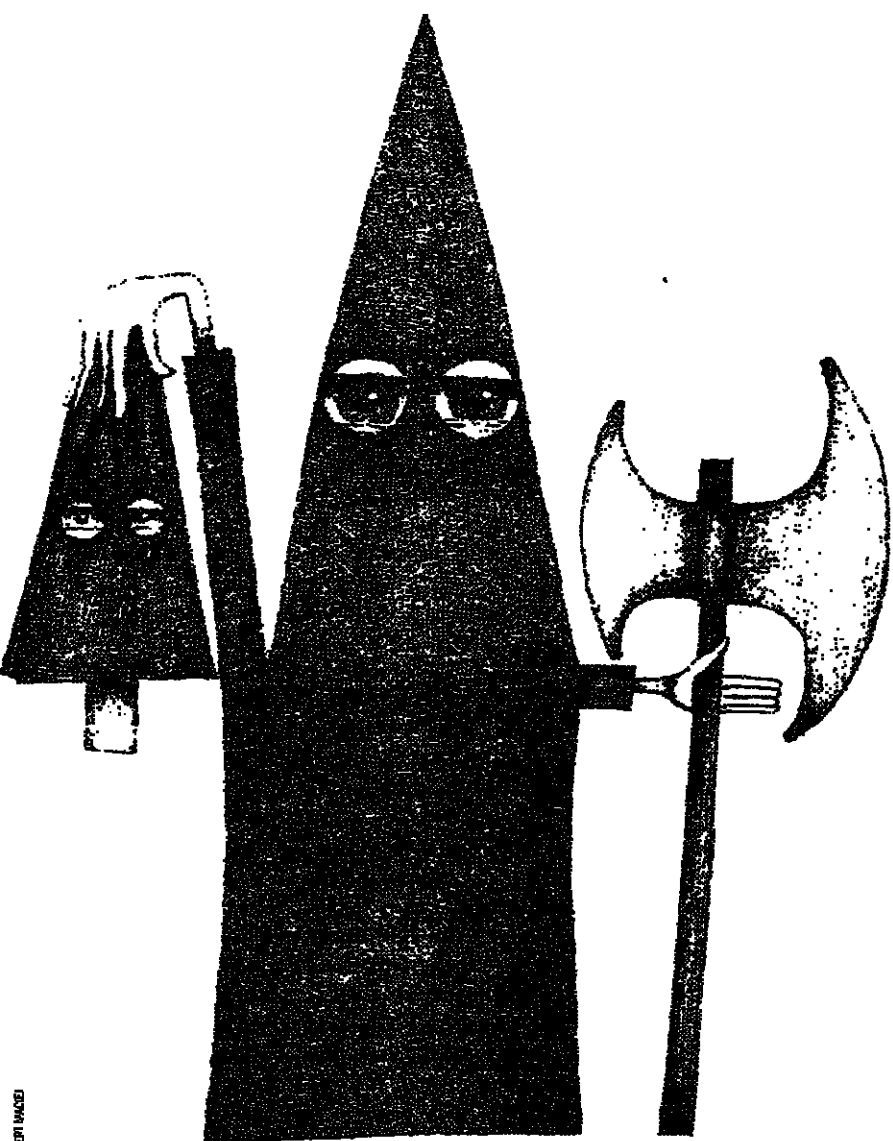
saw it coming. "I pressed several ranking members of the Cuban government and the head of the central bank about their plan for the future if the embargo was lifted," he told me. "It seemed to me they hadn't even considered it. The more I talked with them the more I realized how they could not survive the invasion of US dollars that would accompany the end of the embargo. It seemed to me just as simple as that."

The bombs in London, Jerusalem and even the events in the Straits of Florida may be the beginning of the end for long festering movements or states of mind. The bombast being hurled across the Formosa Straits is altogether different. The dispute between China and Taiwan is deep and fundamental, involving countries of real demographic, political and economic weight.

For the moment, it is a shrill Chinese opera performed by those who know each other only too well. The real danger lies not from within, but in the outside world. The international community, not understanding the ritual or comprehending the script well enough, could somehow embarrass one or the other side to overreact.

This latest crisis between the two comes at a dangerous time. Beijing is embroiled in a leadership struggle as it prepares to absorb Hong Kong. Taipei is embarking on its first truly democratic election. They are beginning to compete more directly than ever in the global marketplace. The standoff is between an economic bull and a political bear. ☐

CROCKER SNOW JR. IS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *The World Paper*.



Has the process gone beyond politicians?

Ordinary people embrace peace

By Michael Fabricant

THE IRA HAS returned, with typical brutality, to its indiscriminate terror campaign. When they exploded a massive bomb made of semtex and fertilizer outside a crowded office block in London's Canary Wharf at the end of a cold February day, they killed two news agents; one of the victims was an Indian Muslim.

A few days later, when another similar device exploded on a bus in the Aldwych just as people were emerging from pubs and cafes, the only casualty was the bomber himself.

Both bombs were designed to cause the maximum injury to civilians. They caused outrage in both Great Britain and the Irish Republic, cutting off the IRA and its political wing, Gerry Adams' Sinn Féin, from the mainstream of democratic nationalist opinion. Both the British and Irish governments responded to the IRA's atrocities by canceling all ministerial meetings with Sinn Féin until the IRA announced a clear and unequivocal restoration of their ceasefire.

Yet, despite the IRA's bombs, the momentum of the peace process continues. Why? Because ordinary people in Britain and Ireland will not allow it to die. The last 17 months have meant too much for those people to give up now. For many people throughout Ireland there has, at last, been freedom from fear, a chance to live a normal life and to hope for the future. The bleak thunderclouds of centuries of Irish history seemed at last to have parted, allowing in the light of a new dawn of reconciliation.

That is the fervent wish of both the British Prime Minister, John Major, and his Irish counterpart, John Bruton. Their peace plan, endorsed, underwritten and actively supported by US President Bill Clinton, was designed to bring about a permanent political settlement, based on consent. But the peace process has to have the confidence of all Ulster's political parties, nationalist and unionist. And many people doubt the IRA's good faith.

They doubted that when the IRA said that its ceasefire was "complete," that was the same as saying that it was "permanent." Now the IRA has shown that those doubts were right. Peace and illegal private armies can never be compatible and the question of illegal arms cannot be brushed aside or washed away.

As the Northern Ireland Minister of State, Michael Ancram, has said: "There can never be confidence to reach the necessary compromises of a negotiated settlement under the shadow of the bullet and the bomb. In one savage act the IRA have brought this question once again to the very fore."

The peace process will go on. The British and Irish governments have set out a clear path to all-party talks on June 10. Ulster's political parties will take part in elections beforehand, which will establish their democratic mandate to enter into negotiations and create the necessary confidence.

But Sinn Féin and the IRA, by their return to terror, have excluded themselves from the peace process. It is important to understand that they have not been excluded. The British Government have not refused to allow them into all-party talks; rather by their own actions, they have deliberately excluded themselves.

But the door is still open. They can choose to re-enter the peace process and participate in full negotiations at any time they wish. What they cannot do, however, is to maintain the threat of violence as a political weapon and expect to join in negotiations with the democratic parties. There can be no compromise over this; any attempt at compromise would mean that at an unfavorable stage in the negotiations the IRA could simply threaten to explode another bomb to achieve its objectives. None of the other political parties will negotiate with them on that basis.

So there has to be a clear, unequivocal renunciation of violence by the IRA and a willingness to accept and abide by the ultimate conclusions of all-party negotiations. The path to peace is now clear. Sinn Féin has everything to gain by entering into the process and Ireland has everything to lose if they do not. The choice is not between Britain or Irish rule but between democracy and terrorism.

The British and Irish Governments share a common belief in democracy. It is these democratic values which must now triumph because they are the only sure guarantor of peace in Ireland. ☐

MICHAEL FABRICANT IS A CONSERVATIVE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT REPRESENTING THE STAFFORDSHIRE MID CONSTITUENCY. HIS FEE WAS DONATED TO BELFAST'S ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL.

Irish peace process rests on ill-founded assumptions

The IRA bombs a broken structure

By Padraig O'Malley

THERE ARE MANY who would argue that the recent bombings by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in London achieved their tactical goal, forcing the British and Irish governments to set a date for multi-party talks and bringing to an end the stalemate that had bogged down the peace process in Northern Ireland for the last 18 months.

Although both governments have agreed to a complicated mish-mash of measures in a desperate attempt to keep the process alive at almost any cost, the fact is that they have not induced the IRA to reinstate its ceasefire. Indeed, the IRA has rejected the Anglo-Irish attempt to revive the process as "inadequate," reaffirmed that "under no circumstances" would it decommission its armory until there was a "final negotiated settlement" to the conflict, and dismissed out-of-hand the calls for a new ceasefire. And even if a new ceasefire did somehow materialize, it would not bring real peace—peace that is the product of a durable and lasting political settlement.

In short, to say the IRA has bombed its way to the negotiating table or has lit a metaphorical fuse under the peace process would be to simplify the conflict to the point of willful distortion. At the moment there is nothing the IRA can bomb its way to.

In Northern Ireland, the terrible beauties described by the poet W.B. Yeats have become terrible mistakes, parasites that feed on each other with an insatiable appetite to capture what has never existed in the cause of a dream that has brought only nightmare, in the name of an aspiration few ascribe to but none will renounce.

Irreident Irish Nationalism has gone back to its roots. Brits out, and if

it takes the death of some poor Bengali blown to rubble in the explosion at Canary Wharf to advance the cause of a united Ireland, so be it. For the hardliners who have seized control of the IRA's Army Council, the ceasefire was simply war by other means, and when it failed to deliver a place for Sinn Féin at all-party talks without the IRA having to commit itself to unacceptable conditions, its utility was over.

Meanwhile, what remains of the peace process continues to disintegrate in the face of virtual paralysis in the corridors of power in London and Dublin. Worse still is the palpable lack of trust among the key players on all sides—even on the same side. Whis-

pers of who is to blame for what abound, even as the whisperers themselves admit to the pointlessness of the practice. Political shadow-boxing, where the clever feint counts as a substantial punch, usurps the place of honest dialogue.

What now remains to be seen is how the Loyalist paramilitaries will respond; whether, in the event of further bombings in mainland British cities, they will resort to targets in Dublin and other cities in the Irish Republic, or whether they will wait for the IRA to breach the ceasefire in the North. If the latter takes place, we're back to the days of escalating sectarian killings,

and unfortunately, perhaps that's the way it will have to be; that things will have to get a lot worse before they get better.

One problem facing both governments is to assess where Sinn Féin stands in relation to the IRA. If, as Sinn Féin insists, it does not speak for the IRA (it draws almost theological distinctions between being in a position to speak to the IRA and being able to speak for the IRA; to having influence with the IRA and having control over the IRA), then this begs the question: what influence does Sinn Féin have with the IRA, and what can it deliver in all-party talks?

So far, there has been the widely-held assumption on all sides, never denied by Sinn Féin when it has been

Did the IRA light a fire under the peace process?

convenient not to do so, was that Sinn Féin did speak for the IRA. This was the reason for "wooing" Sinn Féin into the process in the first place.

Indeed, John Major has gone so far as to say that the two organizations are interchangeable in their leadership structures and Tories routinely refer to Sinn Féin/IRA, to reinforce their contention that both organizations are one and the same. (The Irish government holds a similar, but more realistic, view.)

Neither government can decide whether to feed Gerry Adams to the republican hounds baying at his heels. To further complicate matters, both

governments still regard him as the most reasonable, able, and sophisticated of the Sinn Féin leaders. And there seems no one on the horizon who seems capable of replacing him.

A fundamental miscalculation in the analysis of both governments has been their belief that Adams could carry the IRA with him. The British thought he could carry the IRA with him on decommissioning, despite the IRA making it clear that decommissioning of arms prior to all-party talks would be tantamount to an admission of surrender and was simply not on.

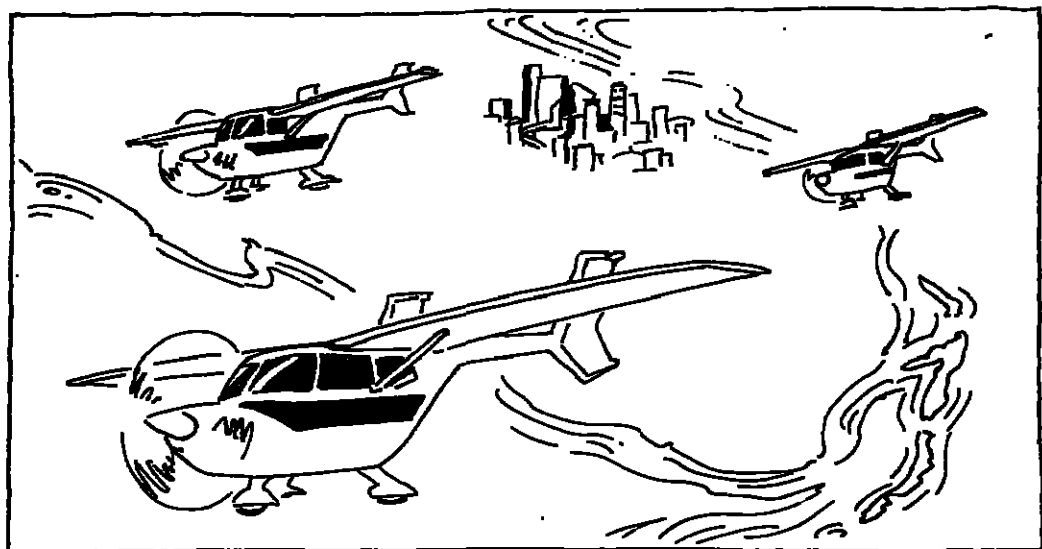
Dublin, meanwhile, believed that he could carry the IRA with him on the question of consent (that the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland is necessary before a change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland can take place.) Both beliefs proved to be ill-founded illusions.

The problem is that the peace-process itself—as initially designed and executed—was fatally flawed, although to point that out in the euphoria that accompanied the first peace in Northern Ireland in nearly 30 years left one open to the accusation of being a doomsayer, even of being somehow opposed to the peace process itself. The doubting Thomases kept their heads down and their doubts to themselves.

The ceasefire was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for peace. All parties held tenaciously to their belief in its self-generating sustainability, even when the political circles to be squared became political circles to be cubed.

While it is easy to put the blame for the breakdown on the impasse over decommissioning of arms and the British government's rejection of the Mitchell commission's suggestion regarding decommissioning and talks in

► BROKEN STRUCTURES PAGE 2



Ignoring history, US repeats it

By Pedro Monreal

MANY PEOPLE WERE shocked when Cuban defense forces shot down a pair of US-registered planes on February 24. But if they had read their history, they would not have been so surprised: aircraft incidents have played an outstanding role in the conflict between the US and Cuba.

Many of these people also asked if the infringement of Cuban sovereignty by civilian aircraft merited the death of four people. To most Cubans, the answer is very clear: despite the high price to Cuba, their government's action was the right one. The notion that aircraft belonging to an organization of Cuban exiles with a known record of subversive activities can repeatedly violate Cuban sovereignty with impunity—no matter what accomplishments, if any, they could claim in other areas—was simply not supported by past experience.

History clearly shows that there was no reason to think that this type of aircraft could not be considered unfriendly by Cuban air defenses. There is a thick record of non-military aircraft from the US conducting subversive missions against the Cuban government. On occasions, air strikes have been carried out by US-based Cuban exile organizations with the sponsorship or consent of American authorities—the 1961 Bay of Pigs assault is probably the best known case in this category.

Different types of aircraft—notably

civilian-registered US planes—have been employed in other kinds of subversive missions, from the logistic support of armed groups inside Cuba to dropping antigovernment propaganda.

These are also acts of war, as any West Point student could testify. Just last January, planes flying from South Florida poured thousands of leaflets

over Havana inciting Cuban citizens to overthrow the government, an action that easily qualifies as a national security threat.

The point to be stressed is not that the planes were registered as civilian aircraft. For people accountable for the defense of Cuba, the status of incoming planes is not determined by its registry but by its possible mission. It is well documented, and it was public at the time, that Cuban authorities considered these types of planes as capable of carrying out subversive missions. They issued clear and timely warnings about the dangers associated with that kind of flights. The writing was on the wall, but some people missed it.

The refusal of the crew of the planes to stop their incursion into Cuban airspace when they were asked to do so triggered a predictable course of action by Cuban armed forces. The action was brutal and the loss of human lives is always a regrettable event, but that is what military actions—even defensive ones—are about. The view of the

Cuban government, supported by a majority of Cuba's citizens, is that the action was defensive. It was not motivated by a decision to punish someone, but was dictated by national security considerations. The incident can be explained from a logical and a historical perspective.

The US government's response to the incident reveals a lack of understanding



standing of the lessons of history and an impulse to supplant diplomacy with the expansion of electoral politicking to foreign affairs. The tightening of the US economic blockade and the adoption of other measures against Cuba can be seen as a remake of an old, bad movie. Past lessons are thus missed and imaginative policies are discarded.

In fact, the US government's reaction to the incident has derided, at least temporarily, an emerging trend in US policy toward Cuba: the so-called "Track II" which stressed communications, travel, humanitarian aid and personal contacts as key policy instruments.

The new approach has been highly controversial in Cuba. It is not considered a completely new development, since those instruments have been used before. But this policy is perceived by the Cuban government as dangerously subversive. There is open recognition that, if applied in full force, the "Track II" policy could pose greater challenges for the Cuban government than the traditional approach that has been reinforced after the incident with the planes.

The negative impact on Cuba of the recent US measure cannot be easily discarded, particularly its eventual effects on the economy, although it is difficult to make accurate predictions since the outcome will depend to a great extent on its implementation and the reaction of third parties. The US economic blockade is already so tight that there is not really many spaces left to close—unless the assumption is made that the rest of the world will obediently follow Washington's dictum.

To establish the kind of embargo dreamed of for many years by conservative Cuban exiles and recently transformed into official policy, the US government would have to lead a sort of trade crusade against the rest of the world, not exactly a winning proposition in the globalized economy of the late 20th century. Although strong-arm policies could have a chilling effect on actual and potential trade partners and investors, full implementation of the Helms-Burton bill could be a diplomatic mess.

A final observation: it is almost an "iron law" in the relations between the US and Cuba since 1959 that the Cuban government is at its best when playing the game of nationalist confrontation vis-a-vis the United States. Washington should know that. ☐

PEDRO MONREAL IS A RESEARCH ASSOCIATE AT THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAS IN HAVANA, CUBA.

Q Was Cuba's sovereignty worth four civilian lives?

Cuba shoots down its options

By Arturo Villar

EVEN BEFORE the world's outcry over the Cuban government's shooting down of two American civilian planes had run its course, foreign governments everywhere were pointing their fingers—not at Fidel Castro—but at President Bill Clinton. They blamed Clinton for reacting to the February 24 shootdown by signing into law the so-called Helms-Burton bill, which he had previously threatened to veto because it violated basic tenets of international trade.

At first glance, this turnabout over a potentially damaging event for the Cuban government would indicate that, once again, Cuban leader Fidel Castro had succeeded at diverting world attention from one of his actions to those of

massive assistance from the Soviet Union and radically transform his country's economic system, gaining total political control over its population.

But when, in 1974, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger tried to engage the Cuban government in negotiations linked to an overall accommodation with the Soviets, Castro responded by sending his soldiers to Angola, scuttling Kissinger's peaceful overtures and, by forcing the Soviet Union to support his expeditionary efforts in Africa, straining US relations with Moscow.

In 1980, after President Jimmy Carter recruited a group of Cuban-American Democrats to engage Castro in a dialogue that would pave the way for meaningful negotiations between Washington and Havana, Fidel opened the Mariel port and sent 125,000 Cuban refugees to Florida's coasts in a matter of weeks, not only burying Carter's efforts, but also contributing to his defeat at the hands of Ronald Reagan.

In a strange twist of fate, not directly attributable to Castro, some of the Mariel refugees wound up in Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, rioted there and weakened then Governor Bill Clinton's reelection chances.

After eight years of evil-empire rhetoric under President Reagan and four of benign neglect by President Bush, the current US administration sought to turn candidate Clinton's opportunistic support for the embargo-tightening Torricelli Bill into a positive. The President and Richard Nuccio, his Cuba czar and co-author of the Torricelli legislation, turned their focus to the bill's Track II component: opening communication channels to the island, allowing humanitarian aid and fostering civil society. This policy shift heartened moderate Cuban-

dares move in that direction.

But, even if he had repeatedly done it before, why would a financially besieged Fidel Castro this time torpedo a US government move that offered the only possible lifeline to his devastated economy?

The answer may well lie in Castro's repeated assertions that the "revolution" will allow only those economic reforms that do not affect his government's total control over the Cuban population, and his realization that a lifting of the US embargo would open a flood of uncontrollable changes in his economic and political system.

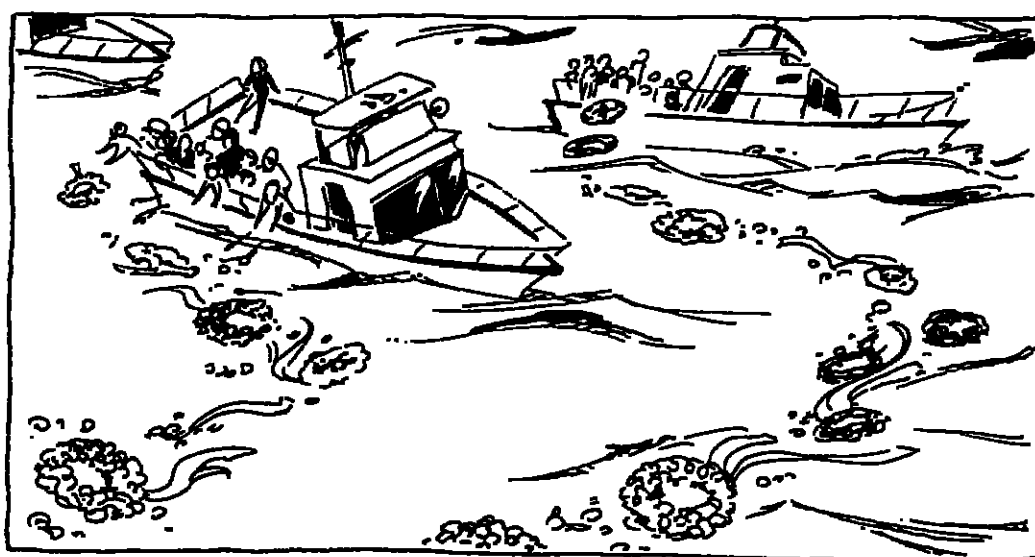
But it is also very clear that one of the most important factors for Castro's continuing authority over the revolutionary process has been his better than average record of outsmarting US presidents. His followers in Cuba have always believed that, no matter how crazy his actions vis-a-vis the US, he could always be counted on to prevail over adversaries that could be lured back to reason with some apparent gesture of good will. For them there was always some light at the end of the tunnel as long as Fidel was in charge.

Castro has, once more, embarrassed and created international problems for a US president. But this time he has probably overplayed his hand. The Helms-Burton bill signed by President Clinton on March 12 has unexpectedly closed all doors to a resumption of relations between the two nations as long as he remains in power.

It will now take an act of Congress to revise US policy towards Cuba. And, given the level of hostility, it will probably take an act of God to change the minds of the overwhelming majority in the Congress who voted for Helms-Burton.

This time, Fidel seems to have gotten much more than he bargained for. He went looking for a chill and got a deep freeze instead. ☐

ARTURO VILLAR IS PUBLISHER OF THE MIAMI-BASED *LATIN AMERICAN Business Reports*.



BROKEN STRUCTURES

Continued from page 1

tandem (although how Mitchell envisaged bringing the Unionist parties into the negotiating tent is another matter), the cold reality is that the origins of the breakdown were embedded in the premises upon which the peace process itself was built.

Those premises could not bear the weight of the peace process because they were based on the false expectations that some agreed end to the conflict would emerge, if only the guns were silenced. ☐

PADRAIC O'MALLEY, A SPECIALIST ON DIVIDED SOCIETIES, IS A SENIOR FELLOW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS' MCCORMACK INSTITUTE.

THE WORLD PAPER

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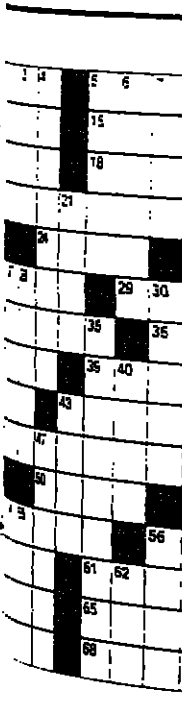
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CROSSWORD P



41. Hallelujah
 42. Holiday time
 43. Jackson
 44. Abhor
 45. Hoopoe
 46. Jinx
 47. Author
 48. Garment
 49. Propagator
 50. Call centers
 51. Hooping
 52. Verbs
 53. Hallelujah
 54. Party
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 59. Member
 60. Member

DOWN

1. Tale
 2. Over

3. Jacob's
 4. Trochee
 5. Skin
 6. Turns
 7. Omelette
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 9. Animal
 10. Erection
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 12. Jacob's
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The Star's TV GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 6-12 April

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

2:00—Moomin
2:30—Wish Kid
3:00—Big Brother Jake
3:25—Blue Heelers
4:00—T.A.O.
5:00—News Flash
5:01—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—The Nanny
8:00—Baby It's You
8:25—Rock Around The World
9:00—World Echo
9:10—Sea Powers
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—The Bold and the Beautiful
10:25—Feature Film: *On Thin Ice*, starring: Charles Stratton and Denise Nicholas
11:50—Mancuso FBI

SUNDAY

2:00—The Flintstones
2:30—Adventure's on the Rainbow Pond
3:00—Mac and Muttley
3:25—The Peak Practice
4:10—T.A.O.
5:00—News Flash
5:01—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Baskerville P.D.
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:25—Women of the World
8:45—Magazine 0.1
9:00—Murphy Brown
9:30—Heartbeat
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—The Bold and the Beautiful
11:10—Counterstrike
12:00—The American Chart Show

MONDAY

2:00—Bonkers
2:30—Richie Rich
3:00—Bush School

TUESDAY

2:00—Iris the Happy Professor
2:15—Captain Planet
2:40—Jonny Quest
3:00—ALF
3:40—Scientific Eye
4:00—T.A.O.
5:00—News Flash
5:01—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Evening Shade
8:00—World Net
8:30—Varieties
8:35—Meat Docs
9:20—Hunter
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—The Bold and the Beautiful
11:10—Airwolf
12:00—The Silk Road
12:40—The Good Life

WEDNESDAY

2:00—The Flintstones
2:30—Speed Racer
2:50—Bill Nye the Science Guy
3:15—Dinosaurs
3:45—The Secret World of Alex Mac

THURSDAY

1:00—Aladdin
1:30—Treasure Island
2:00—My Secret Identity
2:20—NBA
3:15—The Crystal Maze
3:40—Pirates
4:30—Gillette World Sport
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Carol and Company
8:00—The Album Show
8:45—Star Trek
9:30—Murphy Brown

FRIDAY

1:00—The Pebbles and Bamm Bamm Show
1:30—Iris the Happy Professor
1:45—See How They Grow
1:55—Bush School
2:10—The Private Life of Plants
3:00—Spider Man
3:30—The Private Life of Plants
4:15—Wonder Why
4:35—Give Us a Clue
5:00—News Flash
5:01—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Short Story Cinema
8:00—Sea Quest
8:45—It Had To Be You
9:10—She's Out
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Classic Movie: The Night of the Following Day

SATURDAY

2:00—Moomin
2:30—Wish Kid
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3:25—Blue Heelers
4:00—T.A.O.
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11:10—Counterstrike
12:00—The American Chart Show

MONDAY

2:00—Bonkers
2:30—Richie Rich
3:00—Bush School



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PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI

5:00—Dessins animés
Ordy
Cédeon
5:30—Série
Extrême limite
«Bas les masques»
6:00—Série
Château Vallon
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Faut pas rêver
«Brésil»

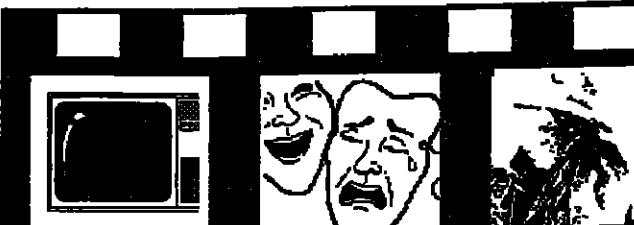
DIMANCHE

5:00—Dessins animés
Ordy
Cédeon
5:30—Série
Extrême limite
«Sunset twist»
6:00—Magazine musical
L'intégrale
«Téléphone»
6:30—Messe de Pâques
Résumé de la messe de Pâques de la cathédrale St Pierre à Rome
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Sports et musique

LUNDI

5:00—Dessins animés
Ordy
Cédeon
5:20—Série
Extrême limite
«Mémoire courte»
05:50—Spectacle
Cirque
6:20—Divertissement
L'école des fans
«Henri Salvador»
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Cinq sur cinq

Programs are subject to change by JTV



Cinema

(Ratings for each film begin with a "star" rating — one star meaning "poor," four meaning "excellent" — followed by the Motion Picture Association of America rating, and then by a family-viewing guide, the key for which appears below.)

"LEAVING LAS VEGAS" (MGM/UA, \$97.51): Nicolas Cage and Elisabeth Shue earned rave reviews — and Oscar nominations — for their performances as two outsiders, a just-fired Hollywood agent and a prostitute, who become drawn to each other against the colorful backdrop of the gambling mecca. Director Mike Figgis also received an Academy Award nod for his adaptation of John O'Brien's novel. *** (R: AS, P)

"OPERATION DUMBO DROP" (Disney, \$100.72): Based on a true story, this comedy-adventure features Danny Glover as a military commander during the Vietnam war who reluctantly becomes involved in a secret operation — to transport an elephant through rugged jungle territory, an undertaking that ultimately turns the animal into a parachuting pachyderm. Ray Liotta and Denis Leary ("The Ref") also star. *** (PG: P)

HELD OVER: "A WALK IN THE CLOUDS" (Fox, \$100.71): After proving himself adept at action in "Speed," Keanu Reeves turned highly romantic in director Alfonso Arau's ("Like Water for Chocolate") drama. Reeves plays a married war veteran who poses as the husband of a pregnant, unwed woman (Aitana Sanchez-Gijon) to save her from potential family disgrace, then truly falls for her; Anthony Quinn also appears. *** (PG-13: AS, P)

"THE BROTHERS McMULLEN" (Fox, \$100.71): Edward Burns — a former production assistant at "Entertainment Tonight" — made an extremely big splash with critics and audiences alike as writer, director and co-star of this saga of three Irish-American siblings in Long Island. Jack Mulcahy and Mike McGonigle play the other brothers, as the three men trade observations on women and other aspect of life. ** (PG-13: AS, P, V)

"RAGING ANGELS" (Vidmark, \$92.99): A melodrama with science-fiction undercurrents, this tale casts Sean Patrick Flanery — TV's "Young Indiana Jones," also seen last fall in "Powder" — and Monet Mazur as musicians drawn into an organization that purports to campaign for world peace. However, the couple soon learn that's only a front for a sinister brainwashing scheme; Diane Ladd also is featured. ** (R: AS, P, V)

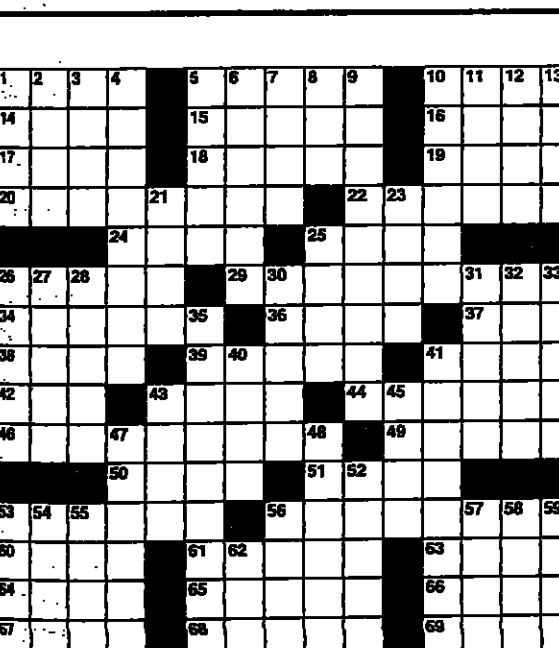
COMING SOON: "SEVEN" (New Line, March 26): Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman play detective partners in the thriller about a killer whose crimes follow the seven deadly sins. (R)

"DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS" (Columbia/TriStar, April 2): Denzel Washington plays an amateur 1940s private eye drawn into a case involving political corruption. (R)

FAMILY-VIEWING GUIDE KEY: AS, adult situations; N, nudity; P, profanity; V, violence; GV, particularly graphic violence.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS
1 Historical times
5 Swinging doors
10 Ragout
14 Fluff
15 Out short
16 Soccer
17 Greek letter
18 "Ave —"
19 Formerly Paris
20 Dreamlike quality
22 Kind of monkey
24 Destiny
25 Son of Adam
26 Street urchin
27 Confusions
34 Missteps
37 Food fish
38 — Paulo
39 Luxurious
39 Kind of roller
41 Hallelujah
42 Holiday time
43 Jacobite
44 Abhor
46 Hopeless
48 Ume
50 Author Gardner
51 Prognosticator
53 Cell centers
57 Budding actresses
60 Verbal
61 Hulled grain
63 Czar
64 Facility
65 Tere —
66 Egyptian river
67 Blind part
68 10th U.S. president
69 Meritman
1 DOWN
1 Yale man
2 Violent disturbance
3 Square column
4 Sea creature
5 Range
6 Humiliated
7 Civil action case
8 Silkworm
9 Nautilus
10 Protective armor
11 High, rocky hills
12 Jacob's brother
13 Skin tumors
14 Negative
15 Russian native
21 Animal group
25 Arthur of legend
26 Yawned
27 Overhead
28 Erato and Clio
30 Seagull bit of land
31 Colorado park
32 Poker term
33 Kinds
34 Heavenly illumination
40 Dies —
41 Glossy bird
43 Roll call word
45 Always
47 Fill

—THIS WEEK'S— HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun goes from Pisces to Aries, speeding things up a bit. Spring fever may also hit, though. Run errands. Catch up on reading.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Do research to figure out what's really going on. Probe deeper and you'll find even more interesting stuff. Conditions change in your favor.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Choose a worthy cause and get involved. You and your friends are much needed. You may have to pull a couple of all-nighters to get deadlines met.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Be patient with a drift supervisor. Your acerbic comments would not be appreciated. Group activities take more of your time.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Travel if at all possible. If not, study philosophy and religion. You could have marvelous insights. A nasty supervisor is even madder and more insufferable.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Apply for a grant. A long distance call clinches travel arrangements. A trip's recommended. If nothing's scheduled vocationally, arrange one recreationally.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your partner is right on target. Listen and learn. Cut back your expenses and find a new source of income. You're very lucky, especially in love.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You may have trouble focusing on your work, but you'll come up with some fantastic ideas. Write them down. An exciting person attracts your attention.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Hurry to keep up with your work and spend time putting out wildfires. You won't have time to play.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Spend as much time as possible at home. Work could lead to a romantic entanglement. Be careful, if you're not ready to settle down.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Study, you'll soak up information like a sponge. One insight borders on genius. Listen to a friend's complaints and take action.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You may get a windfall. Watch the gutters for \$20 bills. Take notes, you'll learn a lot!

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Spend as much time as possible in meditation or listening to music. You'll learn things that help you succeed.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: You have magical powers this year. Use them to serve others and you'll benefit too. Learn to make money and you'll always be free.

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Bridge

Double Talk Can Be Costly
By Tannah Hirsch

North-South vulnerable. South for a low-level penalty double, so one no trump was a reasonable, albeit rather conservative, compromise.

NORTH
♠ 9 7 6 5 3
♥ K 3
♦ A 5 3
♣ K J 5

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♥ A J 10 7 5
♦ Void
♣ 9 8 7

EAST
♠ J 2
♥ Q 8 4
♦ K J 9 8
♣ 6 4 3 2

SOUTH
♠ A
♥ 9 6 2
♦ Q 10 7 6 4 2
♣ A Q 10

The bidding:
South 1♣ West 1NT North 3♣ East 3♣
South 4♣ West 4♣ North 5♣ East 5♣
Pass Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠
Judging from the result of this hand, East was in the conversion business. With one careless word, East changed a small plus into a large minus!

North had a very difficult bid to make on the first round. The quality of the spade suit was not good enough

West led the king of spades. Normally, declarer would plan to lead a heart toward the king, subsequently ruff a heart in dummy then cash the ace of diamonds and lead a diamond up to the closed hand, but in light of the double that line was doomed to fail.

Instead, declarer led a heart at trick two and rose with the king when West followed low. East won the heart return with the queen and continued with a third round, forcing dummy to ruff.

A low diamond was covered by the eight and taken with the ten as West showed out. After cashing the ace of clubs, the queen of clubs was overtaken with the king for a spade ruff. The ten of clubs, overtaken by the jack, provided the entry for another spade ruff, low as East discarded a club.

The six of diamonds to the ace completed East's discomfort. At trick 12 with 10 tricks in the bank, declarer led a spade through East's K J of diamonds, and the queen of trumps had to score the fulfilling trick.

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Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HEYN0

BORNI

GEANET

FEYGIF



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: ○○○○○○○○

Answer: HONEY ROBIN NEGATE EFFGY

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Words of Wisdom

Pride may cause you to look foolish sometimes, but it also may prevent you from looking foolishly at others.

If you make the world a little better, then you have accomplished a great deal.

Good manners reflect good virtues.

It's difficult for sorrow to intrude on a busy life.

Original thinking occurs after you look at a problem with fresh eyes.

Perseverance is success in small degrees — even rocks by the sea are eventually worn down by the waves.

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Publi-Graphics sharpens skills with regional training program

PUBLI-GRAPHICS are conducting a regional training program for account servicing personnel from offices across the region. The program is called The Marketing Lab '96.

The four-day training program was held at the Forte Grand, Amman, from the 23-26 March. Mr William Foley, former Vice President of Young & Rubicam and Director of the Young & Rubicam Resource center in New York, is the principal trainer for program. The Marketing Lab is designed to improve account handlers' skills in aspects of marketing including client relationships and creative briefing.

According to Foley "The Marketing Lab was developed jointly by Publi-Graphics and me to give the executives a better perspective of marketing and advertising strategies. Numerous case histories from around the world are examined and analyzed during the course of the program."

The Marketing Lab '96, is the second of the training program in its series. The success of the Marketing Lab conducted in 1995 in Dubai, has prompted some of Publi-Graphics' clients like Kodak and Royal Jordanian Airlines to send their executives for the program.

Says Mustapha Assad, President and CEO of Publi-Graphics "training is very much part of the long term strategy of Publi-Graphics. We strive to constantly develop the skills of our executives so that we deliver a better product to our clients, in the form of a superior service and great advertising." Publi-Graphics is one of the biggest advertising agency groups in the region with 15 offices in 11 countries. Publi-Graphics have been in operation for over two decades in the Middle East.

Up-and-coming talented students

By Halloway
Special to The Star

MULTI-TALENTED artists and musicians from various schools performed in an annual talent show hosted by the Ahliyyah School for Girls, 28 March.

The panel of judges, consisting of old-time as well as new musicians, cast their votes as an enthusiastic crowd cheered to an array of talented singers and musicians vying for the gold cup, from the Ahliyyah School for Girls, the Amman National School (AMS), the Baccalaureate School, the Bishop School of Amman, and the National Orthodox School (NOS).

Named first-place was Zaid Dirani of the AMS, who had composed and dramatically performed his own classical piece, *Reflections of Innocence*, on the piano. The piece brought the audience from the winter of a youth's tempestuous life into subtle spring.

Taking second place was talented Taleen Karrash of NOS, whose melodramatic voice carried a tune without music accompaniment to *Didn't We Almost Win*.

Coming in third place was The Best of Arabia, an upbeat drum act performed by Sa'ad Khoury and Fadi Boury of BSA, which mixed the traditional Middle Eastern *durbakeh* along with Western percussion drums, articulating an *East Meets West* theme.

Student Council Vice-President Dania Katameh and her peers from The Ahliyyah School for Girls were responsible for this well-produced event. Musician Hazzam Amin provided sound reinforcement and remarked on the well organization of this show and the importance of such shows for the advancement and advocacy of youth artists in Jordan.

HABITS ARE
FIRST
COBWEBS,
THEN
CABLES.



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Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Dimona effraie ses voisins

La centrale nucléaire de Dimona située au sud d'Israël, à une quarantaine de kilomètres de Tafilah, inquiète depuis une semaine ses voisins jordaniens et égyptiens.

Une équipe de télévision israélienne a en effet révélé voilà deux semaines que des fuites risquaient d'apparaître dans les conteneurs de déchets nucléaires enfouis sous terre. Certains de ces conteneurs ont 30 ans alors que des fissures sont apparues sur le même type de matériel aux États-Unis au bout de 20 ans.

Selon des analyses effectuées cette semaine par les autorités jordaniennes, aucun niveau inhabituel de radiation n'a été enregistré dans le sud de la Jordanie. De son côté, l'Égypte a décidé la création d'un comité de suivi pour enquêter sur l'existence d'éventuelles fuites, tandis que la Ligue arabe doit, elle, se réunir le 9 avril pour examiner le danger éventuel de ces conteneurs.

Farce du 1er avril ou réelle menace?

Le 1er avril coïncide cette année en Jordanie avec la révélation dans les journaux d'une bien étrange cérémonie. Depuis une dizaine de jours, plusieurs articles font état d'un possible suicide collectif sur le site de Pétra. Une mystérieuse secte néerlandaise semble avoir choisi l'endroit le plus touristique du pays pour demander à ses adeptes de se donner la mort le 14 avril, «le jour du Jugement dernier». Il s'agit de la secte «Immanuel Movement», basée à Waddinxveen, près de La Haye, une société qui ne compterait pas plus d'une centaine d'adeptes.

Les autorités néerlandaises essaient aujourd'hui de vérifier cette information mais ils ne disposent que de peu d'indices. Elles ne peuvent compter pour l'instant que sur les témoignages inquiets de parents de membres de la secte selon lesquels certains membres auraient acheté un ticket aller pour Amman. Mais il est actuellement difficile de repérer les éventuels membres de cette secte au milieu des touristes néerlandais, cinq groupes de touristes néerlandais comprenant entre 18 et 52 personnes, étant attendus dans les trois jours précédant le 14 avril.

SELON

MOI

Le 30 mars était autrefois «le jour de la terre» pour les Palestiniens. Une journée au cours de laquelle on commémorait la terre palestinienne occupée depuis 1948. Ce jour du mois de mars qui symbolisait la solidarité du peuple palestinien dans son combat pour l'acquisition d'une terre propre, datait de 1976.

Cette année-là, Israël a décidé de confisquer des milliers d'hectares de terre dans des villages arabes situés dans le nord de la Palestine.

Des grèves populaires et des manifestations eurent lieu après cette décision. Mais rien n'y fit et ces réquisitions entrèrent en vigueur le 30 mars.

Les protestations qui suivirent pendant des années n'ont jamais été entendues. Et aujourd'hui, avec la nouvelle ère de paix, ni les médias, ni les politiciens, n'essaient de se souvenir de cette lutte. Auparavant, avant la signature de paix, les médias profitaient de cette occasion pour mettre le conflit israélo-palestinien sous les feux de l'actualité.

Le 30 mars était devenu un sujet bateau que nul ne pouvait éviter en Jordanie. La télévision, par exemple, diffusait des films et des documentaires sur le traitement des jeunes prisonniers palestiniens, sur l'usage de la torture en Israël, ou bien sur la contradiction entre l'image de la démocratie israélienne dans le monde et son application dans les territoires occupés. Les chaînes diffusaient aussi des chansons patriotiques, des interviews avec des militaires ou des intellectuels se penchant sur ce conflit.

Aujourd'hui, toute trace de cette journée a disparu. Des deux côtés, on a décidé que l'époque de la guerre était révolue et qu'il fallait tourner la page. On ne pouvait rien apporter de bon. On préférait se souvenir de l'image d'Arafat et Rabin se serrant la main sous les yeux de millions de témoins, de chefs d'Etat. Ravis, les Palestiniens croyaient alors pouvoir fonder leur propre pays. Ils ne pensaient pas que la violation de leurs droits allait durer et que l'accord signé était déséquilibré.

Et aujourd'hui, loin de l'éclatage médiatique qui existait pour la signature du traité de paix, l'emprisonnement des jeunes Palestiniens et le blocage des territoires continuent.

Le contexte actuel de paix ne doit pas tout faire oublier. Et commémorer une terre qui n'appartient toujours pas réellement aux Palestiniens reste d'actualité. Il est en tout cas impossible de tirer un trait sur tout le passé, et décider de ne plus commémorer cette journée ne fait pas oublier le combat et les souffrances actuelles des Palestiniens.

Oroub et Abed

Le Jourdain, on y revient
Tous les jeudis dans le Star
645380

Economie

Entre rêves et cauchemars

Pour se consoler d'un marché boursier déprimé en mars, la Jordanie peut se réjouir d'une amélioration encourageante de ses exportations en 1995.

Mars était un mois triste sur le marché financier d'Amman. Les rêves des investisseurs semblent aujourd'hui être des cauchemars. Les taux d'intérêt élevés et les soucis des Jordaniens concernant la situation en Palestine sont deux des raisons expliquant la chute du prix des actions à Amman. Et pour le moment, le mois d'avril ne semble pas s'annoncer mieux. La plupart des observateurs pensent en effet que la situation ne s'améliorera pas avant les élections israéliennes prévues fin mai. Un pessimisme, partagé aussi par beaucoup d'économistes jordaniens, qui contribue à déprimer la bourse du pays.

Les chiffres de la balance du commerce extérieur pour l'année 1995 sont eux plus encourageants. Pour la première fois, le montant des exportations a dépassé le milliard de dinars, soit une hausse de 211 millions de dinars par rapport à 1994. Les importations ont elles aussi augmenté, passant de 2,36 milliards de dinars en 1994 à 2,59 milliards l'année dernière. Si le déficit commercial reste important, il faut tout de même noter qu'en pourcentage, la hausse des importations entre les deux dernières années est bien inférieure à celle des exportations. Encore loin de l'équilibre, l'économie jordanienne peut se réjouir de cette amélioration et se dire qu'elle est sur la bonne voie pour peut-être un jour réaliser son rêve: un excédent des exportations sur les importations.

Un prêt de 40 millions de dollars pour la Jordanie

James Wolfensohn, président de la Banque mondiale, a annoncé au terme d'une visite en Jordanie que la Banque mondiale venait d'accorder un prêt de 40 millions de dollars à la Jordanie. Cet argent est destiné à réactiver le secteur privé et à réduire le chômage dans le pays. «Il ressort clairement des différents entretiens que j'ai eus ici que la Jordanie a entrepris avec succès un programme de réformes économiques majeures qui vont faire de l'économie jordanienne une rivale compétitive sur le marché régional et mondial (...).»

Principaux pays fournisseurs de la Jordanie (les services ne sont pas inclus dans ces chiffres exprimés en millions de dinars)		
	1995	1994
Irak	316	291
Etats-Unis	241	233
Allemagne	218	184
Italie	139	139
Royaume-Uni	125	121
France	119	112

Les différents bilans économiques dressés pour l'année 1995 permettent d'examiner la place de la France au sein des différents pays fournisseurs de la Jordanie. Comme en témoigne le tableau ci-dessous, les Français ont augmenté en 1995 leurs ventes à la Jordanie. Elle conforte ainsi sa place dans un groupe de trois pays, avec l'Italie et le Royaume-Uni, qui luttent pour se placer juste derrière les trois plus gros fournisseurs, l'Irak, les États-Unis et l'Allemagne. Et si cette tendance continue, la France ayant enregistré en 1995 une plus forte augmentation de ses exportations en Jordanie que l'Italie ou le Royaume-Uni, le classement pourrait peut-être s'inverser dans les années à venir.

Riad al Khouri
Meba S.A.R.L.

Entretien

«La Jordanie, une économie de services»

Depuis 1991, Pierre Boedoz occupait le poste d'attaché commercial au Poste d'expansion économique de l'Ambassade de France. Une expérience qui lui permet, à la veille de son départ pour Sarajevo, de dresser un bilan de l'économie jordanienne.

Quelle est la situation de la Jordanie en matière économique?

Depuis 1991, la Jordanie connaît une double crise, politique et financière: la dévaluation de 1988 et la guerre du Golfe. Le Poste d'expansion économique pensait alors que l'afflux de 350000 personnes dans ce pays représentait une force pour l'économie jordanienne. Il s'agissait en effet de personnes ayant connu d'autres habitudes de consommation, avec un pouvoir d'achat assez important. Il était donc logique de s'intéresser au commerce courant et à la vente de produits manufacturés.

Quelle position occupe la Jordanie dans ce domaine?

Le but de la Jordanie est en fait de s'aligner sur des pays comme l'Italie, le Royaume-Uni. Or, en 1995, la France a réussi à se rapprocher du Royaume-Uni et de l'Italie. La force de la France est d'être relativement présente sur tous les secteurs, et en particulier l'électricité, les phosphates et dérivés, les véhicules et des produits traditionnels comme les cosmétiques.

Comment jugez-vous aujourd'hui la situation de l'économie jordanienne?

La Jordanie, après avoir largement vécu au dessus de ses moyens grâce aux aides des pays du Golfe, a dû engager

une politique d'ajustements structurels pour répondre aux exigences du FMI et de la Banque mondiale. On peut aujourd'hui parler de réussite car tous les paramètres macroéconomiques (inflation, évolution du PIB, investissement...) sont au vert.

Quel est le point faible de la Jordanie?

C'est un pays qui a du mal à exporter. Et en même temps, elle continue à trop importer, revers d'une politique économique libérale.

Le pays était aussi très endetté. Mais depuis 1992, les autorités ont redressé la situation pour ramener le montant de la dette à environ 95% du Produit intérieur brut. Cette diminution a notamment été possible grâce à l'annulation d'une partie des dettes, ainsi que le rachat partiel de certaines dettes.

Sur quelles forces peut s'appuyer la Jordanie pour développer son économie?

Les ressources de la Jordanie ne sont malheureusement pas très nombreuses au niveau des matières premières ou du sous-sol. La Jordanie est en fait une économie de services et elle sait très bien jouer cette carte.

De quelle façon?

La formation, par exemple, tient un rôle très important dans ce pays. Les études supérieures y sont développées. Et une fois que les relations bilatérales auront complètement repris avec tous les pays du Golfe, la Jordanie pourra proposer d'expatrier des responsa-



Depuis 1991, Pierre Boedoz était attaché commercial au Poste d'expansion économique d'Amman.

bles économiques. En échange, elle peut faire venir de la main-d'œuvre à bon marché pour, notamment, son agriculture.

Pensez-vous que la Jordanie puisse être choisie par certains États occidentaux pour délocaliser des productions?

Pas vraiment car les conditions de réussite d'une délocalisation dépendent du marché intérieur du pays qui doit être capable d'absorber une partie de la production. Or, ici, le marché intérieur est trop restreint avec un peu plus de quatre millions d'habitants.

De plus, il existe un effet de mode en matière de délocalisation, et l'Asie reste une région privilégiée dans ce domaine. Seul Israël peut être en fait susceptible d'implanter certaines de ses industries dans ce pays.

dans la région, pensez-vous que la Jordanie continuera à bénéficier des mêmes retombées économiques liées à sa politique extérieure?

Ce pays reste un carrefour par sa position géographique et politique. Le futur Etat palestinien aura besoin de voisins comme la Jordanie pour l'aider, et l'importante communauté palestinienne résidente en Jordanie développera bien sûr beaucoup d'échanges avec ce nouvel Etat.

Par ailleurs, la Jordanie continue à être très importante pour l'Irak, qui a notamment besoin d'un port. L'histoire commune de ces deux pays ne doit pas être oubliée. En fait, l'Irak a besoin d'un petit frère comme la Jordanie, et la Jordanie a besoin du pétrole irakien.

Riad al Khouri

Une fois la paix revenue

Robert Doisneau le photographe du quotidien

Voilà deux ans disparaissait Robert Doisneau, le plus populaire des photographes français. Cet amoureux de Paris a laissé derrière lui une oeuvre tendre et poétique dans laquelle l'humour est très présent. Portrait du «pêcheur d'images».

Doisneau est avant tout un gamin de la banlieue de Paris. Gentilly est son lieu de naissance qu'il ne reniera jamais, réalisant même un documentaire à la fin de sa vie. Montrouge, son lieu de résidence, depuis 1937. C'est dans ce cadre que naît sa vocation de photographe illustrateur. Déçu par une formation de graveur lithographe, il intègre un atelier d'art graphique. C'est là qu'il s'initie à la photographie et réalise son rêve d'enfant: inscrire des décors sur la surface sensible. Il entre ensuite comme photographe chez Renault. Scènes de vie des ouvriers alternent avec des photographies industrielles ou didactiques. Licencié pour retards répétés, il travaille alors comme photographe indépendant.

Pendant la guerre, il vit de petites commandes de photographies publicitaires. Il illustre aussi un ouvrage sur les scientifiques de son époque. Mais surtout, il fixe des moments uniques de la vie quotidienne à Paris sous l'occupation allemande, insistant sur cette vie qui continue malgré les aléas: la jeunesse d'un ouvrier au contrôle d'identité, en bicyclette sur les champs Élysées, les dîners à la lueur des bougies. Cette période noire, Doisneau la tourne en dérision dans maintes photos en jouant l'insolite: un homme promenant un lapin en laisse dans les jardins du Champ-de-Mars avec en fond la Tour Eiffel; les jardins des Tuileries transformés en jardin potager.

La période 1945-1960 est la plus féconde de son œuvre. Rencontres et amitiés marquent ses photos. En entrant à l'agence Rapho, il y gagne la sécurité mais en même temps une certaine liberté de photographe. Ses compagnons de

l'époque se nomment Blaise Cendrars ou Prévert (voir encadré), tous nourris de cette tradition orale et populaire. Le style du «pêcheur d'images» se précise. Ses cadrages sont de plus en plus réalistes, son témoignage plus direct et plus pur encore. Il laisse parler les images sans parti-pris. Les seuls écarts à ces photographies réalistes sont ses bicolages, ses photo-montages et photographies expérimentales.

A la recherche d'un passé disparu

Parmi les genres de la photographie, le portrait tient une large place chez cet humaniste qui s'est «fabriqué», selon son expression, «un petit théâtre de personnes». Ainsi des contacts fortuits se mêlent sans hiérarchie avec des amitiés célèbres. Ses portraits d'artistes et d'intellectuels, comme ceux d'anonymes, révèlent sa passion de la mise en scène. En entrant dans leur intimité, on pénètre peu à peu dans le secret de leur œuvre. On y découvre l'écriture Cotteau dans son intérieur avec sa gouvernante, son chat siamois et son tableau noir d'écolier où il inscrit son programme de travail. La silhouette du sculpteur Jean Arp se découpe de profil entre deux de ses sculptures blanches. C'est avec ce même souci que Doisneau nous dépeint collectionneurs, concierges ou cinéastes, fasciné par ces personnalités. Ainsi figures de légende ou illustres inconnus, les uns comme les autres deviennent familiers. Et s'il sait capter l'homme de la rue, c'est parce qu'il a lui-même ri, vécu avec cette population.

C'est une forme d'autoportrait que nous livre l'artiste. Ce même sens du décor et de la mise en scène, Doisneau l'utilise pour des commandes telles que la série des Baisers.

Ces «French lovers» photogra-

phés pour le magazine Life, en réalité des comédiens embauchés pour l'occasion, semblent plus vrais que nature.

Doisneau est un témoin de son temps. Il immortalise un passé disparu, gouailleur et populaire. Il fixe aussi des lieux aujourd'hui disparus.

À la fin de sa vie, Doisneau revient à ses origines et traque les transformations du paysage urbain. Il réalise alors de longs reportages de commande, notamment en 1984, sur les banlieues nouvelles. De ces images en couleur ressort toute la froideur ressentie par Doisneau devant ces constructions.

Cette nostalgie qui le pousse à chercher des vestiges du passé, comme le bistrot «Au bon coin» encore debout à côté d'un immeuble de béton.

Avec Doisneau, la capitale et sa banlieue se découvrent dans le temps et l'espace sous plusieurs visages. Cliché après cliché, pourtant, le ton persiste, l'humanité transparaît de ses multiples portraits. L'humour teinté de dérision s'immerge derrière les images les plus dures. Pour le spectateur, les murs se remplissent de vie et de gaieté.

Inès Somarrriba

Plusieurs ouvrages de photos sur le Paris de Robert Doisneau ou bien son unité avec Jacques Prévert sont disponibles au CCF.



«La petite seconde d'éternité». C'est ainsi que Robert Doisneau avait légendé cette photo prise à Paris en 1950.

Le poète et le photographe

● Jacques Prévert et Robert Doisneau étaient des amis. Ensemble, ils ont découvert Paris et ses quartiers populaires qui ont donné tant de photos et inspiré tant de textes. Comme ce portrait de Doisneau par Prévert.

«...quand le dormeur éveillé mais encore à demi plongé dans ses mille et une nuits rencontre Robert Doisneau qui lui sourit dans la pauvre lumière de la périphérie, il sourit aussi ou simplement le regarde avec une indifférence amusée et se laisse tirer le portrait.

Sans méfiance, car quelque chose lui dit qu'il est en pays de connaissance et qu'il a affaire à un compagnon du voyage, un compatriote de la vie.

Cela, Robert Doisneau le sait et lorsqu'il travaille à la sauvegarde, c'est avec un humour fraternel et sans

aucun complexe de supériorité qu'il dispose son miroir à alouettes, sa pègre de braconnier et c'est toujours à l'imparfait de l'objectif qu'il conjugue le verbe photographier.



Jacques Prévert à Paris photographié en 1955 par Doisneau.

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman
Cinéma

«L'année Juliette», une comédie de Philippe Le Guay (1994), le 8 avril à 20h00 au Centre culturel français (CCF).

Vidéo

«François Mitterrand et les grands travaux», le 10 avril à 18h00 au CCF. Un «Bouillon de culture» enregistré le 14/04/95 consacré aux travaux effectués durant les deux septennats de François Mitterrand.

Conférence

«Le modèle urbain de Pétra», le 9 avril à 18h00 au CCF. Une conférence illustrée de diapositives donnée par Jean-Marie Dentzer, directeur de l'Institut français archéologique du Proche-Orient et professeur à l'Université de Paris 1.

Activities

Royal Cultural Centre	661026/7	Concord Cinema	677420
American Centre Library	830101	Plaza Cinema	899238
British Council	636147/8	Philadelpha Cinema	634144
French Cultural Centre	637009		
Goethe Institute	641993		
Cervantes Institute (Spanish)	610858		
Turkish Cultural Centre	639777		
Haya Arts Centre	665195		
Y.W.C.A.	641793		
Y.W.M.A.	664251		
Dar al Funun	643252		
Alia Art Gallery	639303		
Baladna Art Gallery	657132		
Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	675571		
Nabil & Hisham's Theatre	625153		

Diplomatic Corps

Algerian	641271/2
Australian	673246/7
Austrian	644635
Bahraini	664148/9
Brazilian	642183
Belgian	675683
Bulgarian	818151
Canadian	666124
Chilean	823360
Cyprus Honorary Cons	677559
Czech	671813/666135
Danish Consulate Gen	603703
Finnish Consulate	824654/824676
French	641273/4
German	689351
Greek	671331/2
Hungarian	815614
Icelandic Consulate	698851
Indian	637262
Indonesian	828911
Irani	639331
Italian	638185
Japanese	675135/6
Kuwait	693101/2
Libyan	641381
Lebanese	641451
Moroccan	619699 / 619693
New Zealand Consulate	636720
North Korean	666349
Norwegian Embassy	644932/4
Omani	684155
Pakistani	622787
Palestine	677517
People's Rep. of China	666139
Philippines	645161
Polish	637153
Romanian	668266
Russian	667738
Saudi Arabian	814154/6
Slovenia Honorary Cons.	861542
Sri Lanka Consulate	645312
South Korean	660745/6
South African	811194
Spanish	614166/9
Sudanese	644251/2
Swedish	669177/9
Swiss	686416/7
Syrian	641076
Taiwan	671530
Tunisian	674307/8
Turkish	643251
U.A.E.	643347/643341
United Kingdom	823100
United States	823011
Yemen	642381
EEC Delegation	668191
ESCWA	694351/8
ICRC	688645
UNDP/WFP	668171/7
UNRWA	607398
UNICEF	629571
UNESCO	606559

Airlines

Adria Airways	667029
Aeroflot	641510
Air Canada	630879
Air France	666055/667824
Air India	688301/2
Air Lanka	682140
Alitalia	625203
Alyemda (Air Yemen)	653691
American Airlines	669068
Arab Wings	894484
Austrian Airlines	637380/667028
Balkan Airlines	665909
British Midland	694802
British Airways	866151
Cathay Pacific	628596
China Airlines	636232
Cyprus Airways	667028
Delta Air Lines	643661
Egypt Air	630011
Emirates Airlines	643341
Gulf Air	653613
Hungarian Airlines	622275
Iberia	637827/644036
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THE STAR'S

COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Eurocom introduces the regions first locally made and locally branded range of multimedia upgrade kits: Euromedia's multimedia kits

EUROCOM, THE No 1 distributor in the Middle East for CD software and multimedia products announced the release of the Euromedia multimedia upgrade kits. These are the first multimedia kits known to be locally packed and locally marketed from Eurocom's headquarters in Dubai.

The Euromedia range of multimedia kits include both large kit, known as the Mega kit, and a starter kit known as the Lite Kit. Both the Mega and the Lite kits will be available with either English or Arabic multimedia CD software.

Eurocom has become well known across the region as being one of the leading innovators in the distribution of multimedia products in the Middle East. The demand for multimedia kits from the reseller base across the region has resulted in the Euromedia projects begin born.

"We consulted our customer channel, and worked on this project for over six-months evaluating and selecting quality manufacturers to work with," commented Alistair Menzies Anderson, managing director of Eurocom. In terms of pricing, Eurocom has a reputation to defend, and the new Euromedia multimedia kits are positioned well ahead of the competition. With respect to quality, Eurocom has elected to go with a select number of brand-name manufacturers;

such as axtech systems of singapore who are the second largest manufacturer of sound cards in the world; optics storage the only current manufacturer of 10-speed drivers; hitachi and mitami who are both mammoth CD rom drive manufacturers; labtec a top-quality Canadian speaker manufacturer, and others.

Eurocom who is the only trade-only distributor who focuses exclusively on multimedia products also announces

computer Reseller News), and it is this market segment that Eurocom is addressing with the plain white packaged version. The retail versions are best suited for the mass merchandisers and the many retail outlets in the region.

Eurocom will be extending their support for the new Euromedia multimedia product range across the whole region through their existing customer network of over 200 resellers and dealers.

EUROCOM

the introduction of the "Eurocom guarantee" program with all our Euromedia products. The Eurocom guarantee is our promise to the end-user that the Euromedia product to their dealer within a limited time-frame if they cannot get their product working properly.

The Euromedia kits will optionally either contain English or Arabic CD software. This means the Euromedia kits will be the only multimedia kits in the Middle East with Arabic CD software. Our Arabic CD software is supplied through our strategic relationships with both future publishers of Lebanon and Khalifa Computers of Egypt, two of the largest publishers of Arabic multimedia software.

Approximately 60% of all PCs sold in the Middle East are locally assembled (source Com-

puter Reseller News), and it is this market segment that Eurocom is addressing with the plain white packaged version. The retail versions are best suited for the mass merchandisers and the many retail outlets in the region. Eurocom will be extending their support for the new Euromedia multimedia product range across the whole region through their existing customer network of over 200 resellers and dealers.

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software

titles. The Euromedia

multimedia

products will

be released with

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for end-users

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■

New Microsoft products bring good looks and productivity to the internet

True type fonts for the Web; free Internet information server; Internet assistant for Microsoft Excel

DUBAI—They say that the best things in life are free and that is certainly true of the new Internet Information Server (IIS) from Microsoft, available on-line free of charge and soon to become a standard component of the Windows NT Server Network Value Pack.

Such is the popularity of US that the product is currently being downloaded at the rate of once every 30 seconds and there were 21,000 new users in the first seven days.

The new product outperforms UNIX and other Windows NT-based Web Servers. It is the first Web server integrated with the Windows NT Server network operating system. It performs more than four times faster than the Netscape Netsite server for Windows NT.

The product allows customers to deploy Web sites on the Internet and within corporate networks, or intranets, and its integration with the Microsoft BackOffice family of products enables a new generation of Web applications and can make thousands of existing database and messaging applications "Web-enabled" immediately.

IIS provides the most powerful Web server available and is optimized for the Windows NT Server, which provides reliability and advanced fault

tolerance, as well as built-in security. The IIS graphical set-up can install and run all Internet services in less than 10 minutes in most cases, compared with UNIX servers that can take hours to install.

Richer Web pages

Meanwhile, Microsoft has announced that its TrueType font technology has been extended to the World Wide Web, allowing designers to

technology that downloads TrueType fonts to consumer PCs as needed, and a royalty-free cross platform licensing program for Microsoft's high performance, TrueType rasterizer, which allows all platforms to support TrueType technology.

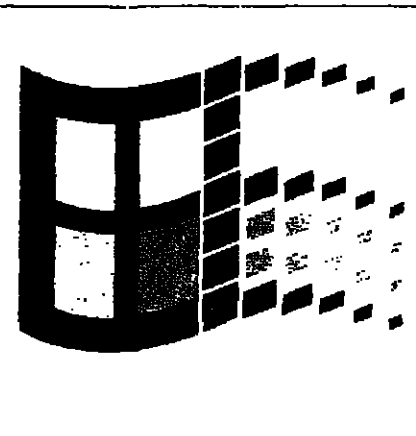
Microsoft Excel Internet Assistant

Microsoft has launched the Internet Assistant for Microsoft Excel (IA-Excel) in add-in wizard which will provide users with the ability to create and distribute Microsoft Excel documents on-line for viewing with any popular browsers.

The IA-Excel, by pressing a series of buttons, will assist user in converting their spreadsheet data to HTML format, either as a separate document or into an existing HTML document.

The product is designed for Excel 7.0 for Windows 95 and Windows NT 3.51, Excel 5.0 for Windows NT, Excel 5.0 for Windows 3x and Excel 5.0 for Macintosh.

IA-Excel is not localized into other languages, but can be used with localized versions of Microsoft Excel. ■



create great-looking Web pages that consumers can view, even if they haven't bought the specific typefaces for their own PCs.

The TrueType-for-the-Web solution will include a core set of no-charge fonts designed for superb on-screen appearance and readability, embedding

News update

Intellectual Property Rights seminar

● The Jordan Computer Society, in cooperation with the American Center, held a seminar entitled "Intellectual Property in the Age of Digital Technology: Computers, Copyrights & the Visual Arts".

The seminar was given by Dr Michael Clark, on Tuesday, 2 April, and was attended by a broad audience of technology professionals, members of the press and others interested in the topic.

This is one of the activities organized by the "Sector Development Committee" at the Jordan Computer Society, and it falls in line with the society's

efforts to educate computer professionals and the general public on the importance of the topic of "Intellectual Property Rights".

Gates To Announce Interactive PC

● Bill Gates is to announce an easy-to-use interactive computer, which is initially going to be called "Simply Interactive PC" or SIPC. Its design will combine entertainment, Internet access and communications all in one simple home or office appliance.

The SIPC may become one of the first Microsoft PC hardware products, considering that the software giant only pro-

duces hardware accessories such as the Microsoft Mouse and Keyboard.

Compaq pushes for more networking

● Compaq hopes to capitalize on the growing networking industry by announcing a series of competitively priced products.

Compaq introduced four new products and has rebranded more than 100 products under a new label called Netelligent.

As demand grows for solutions that link businesses to central computer systems, Compaq can see a high potential for these products.

HRH Princess Basama leads a media delegation to Aqaba

Development through self-help is key to success

By Oroub Al Abed
Special to The Star

AQABA—Article 22 of the constitution stipulates that all qualified Jordanians should be allowed in public offices. The incorporation of Jordanian women in the country's decision-making process, and the improvement of their living and working conditions has always been a major concern of HRH Princess Basama.

Sunday, 31 March, was an occasion when media representatives were invited to observe the working process of the Queen Alia Fund in Aqaba. The first message that was sent was on the importance of self-reliance and how this can improve living conditions, a norm of social adaptation Princess Basama is keen to promote.

Females make up about 49% of the approximately 68,000 population of the Aqaba governorate. In cooperation with public departments, NGOs in Aqaba have a major assignment with regard to the development of women's work

conditions and their contribution to social development. The establishment of the Princess Basama Center for Social Development in Aqaba in 1990 came as an effective step in the organization of female social and productive activity there.

The Centre's objective was clear right from the start, that of providing general and comprehensive services for the family, the basic unit of the society. Children come to the centre after school and take part in some extra-curricular activities, the Director of Social Development at Queen Alia Fund, Mr Hassan Osta told the journalists, as a coral of children were singing.

Vocational training for women is another important part of the centre's programs. For a small amount of money, nine-month courses of dress-making and stitching are organized for interested women, who can then contribute to their families' income, said Awni Al Bashir, the director-general of QAF. In fact, a group of 15 trained tailors



Princess Basama at the computer lab with one of the pupils at the center; and (below) chatting to women at the monthly market held at the center

from the center have marketed the center's mass production of uniforms to well-known organizations like the potash and phosphate companies, Royal Jordanian, and different restaurants on the beach.

The center itself runs for public tenders at a lower price than other tenders.

The tailors get their satisfactory salaries as employees, and the center gains prestige and popularity. Al Bashir explained. He pointed out also that the center has already had an agreement with the Japanese design company, Mika, to send 12 of its dressmaking trainers to undertake a training course for the women annually.

Raising awareness on health, water, and nutrition among the women is another one of the center's objectives.

Every month, the center organizes a rural market where women can bring their surplus garden production for sale, said the center's director in Aqaba. "At the same time they are shown how to conserve food and how to raise and cultivate it in the best and most economic ways," he added.

In cooperation with other

social organizations, the center helps women to improve their social conditions and concentrates on the most effective means of development. By raising the level of overall awareness, the center naturally involves the women in the decision-making process in the home and outside. In this respect, the centers have become particularly important for the people in the Badia and rural areas.

At the end of the tour, a seminar was held at the center with the participation of the Princess and the women's committees in the southern part of the Kingdom. Two papers were presented on women in decision-making, and the role of the media in highlighting women's issues.

A panel of media specialists was lead by Princess Basama for

a lively two hour discussion from the floor. A packed hall of women from as far as Karak and Tafila, spoke of the problems facing women in public life, and emphasized that this male-dominated society must change.

Some participants suggested that women must have a quota in Parliament, while others recognized that this would not be an ideal solution.

The participants all agreed however that the media should promote the issues that concern women and not stoop to sensationalism and stereotyping. ■

The man who didn't go to China, it seems!

By Daniel Williams
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

VENICE—Will these attacks on Italy's contribution to world culture ever stop?

First, there was that thing about how the Vikings beat Columbus to America. Then reports that pasta is had for you. Let's not even discuss the suggestions that Mona Lisa was actually a man.

Now a new book says that Marco Polo, the legendary 13th-century Venetian traveler, never went to China; didn't even get beyond Constantinople; made up the rest of the trip, with the help of an imaginative ghostwriter and heavy cribbing from medieval equivalents of Fodor's guides.

It's all alleged in a study teasingly titled *Did Marco Polo Go to China?* by Frances Wood, who administers the China department of the British Library. Despite the title's question mark, Wood leaves little doubt about her answer: Polo never visited China.

In taking on Marco Polo, Wood challenges one of the more enduring myths of the Western world, a tale of adventure known to millions of schoolchildren.

Polo's "Description of the World," which chronicles his travels between 1271 and 1295, including 17 years in China, aroused interest about Asia all over Europe. Christopher Columbus owned a copy and made detailed notes in the margins.

Almost incidentally, Wood assaults another myth having to do with Polo. Neither the Chinese nor the Italians invented pasta, she says. The Persians did, and it was brought to each place by Arabs.

Wood's thesis has ignited a passionate intellectual purling game in which players, all over the world are taking part. Phone callers have been lighting up the switchboard at the British Library from as far away as Brazil and Japan.

Wood took part in a heated round table at University College in London recently and is

attending another one in France this week. A television station ferried her to China to make a report on her findings. "It was kind of awkward," Wood recalled. "I had to go from place to place saying, 'Marco Polo wasn't here. Marco Polo wasn't here either.'"

On the surface, proof of Polo's visit to China would seem to lie in the details contained in "Description of the World": Polo's depiction of the chessboard layout of Peking streets;

a lost Persian travel book.

The story, she asserts, may have been the work of a certain "Messer Rusticello," a romance writer who shared a jail cell with Marco Polo in 1296, when each was taken prisoner during a Venetian war with Genoa, a year after Polo's return.

For all her shattering of an icon, Wood argues that the historical value of Polo's tale is intact. "The work gathered together what was known about a distant part of the world from sources that are otherwise lost," she said.

Italy's top Polo expert regards Wood's study as flawed. "There is far too much detail, far too much information for this to be a fake," said Ugo Tucci, a retired professor of economic history at Venice University.

Tucci says Wood is guilty of applying current standards to the Middle Ages. That Polo might have included hearsay or other sources in his work was not unusual for the time. "Things heard were as valued as things seen to the medieval observer," Tucci said.

The zigzag itinerary is typical of the way that merchants in Asia traveled, according to Tucci. They picked up a caravan here and there, went south, then north—wherever business took them. "There was no such thing as going from Venice to Peking. That kind of trip is a modern concept," he said.

Tucci concludes that Polo's account contains too much detail to be fiction, and it was the kind of detail of interest to a merchant.

"Polo was far from the first to travel to China. What made him unusual was that he put the adventure down in writing," Tucci said.

At the Piazza San Marco, where Polo allegedly began his journey in 1271—and where he returned 24 years later dressed in ragged clothing whose hem was filled with diamonds and rubies—the attack on Marco Polo is like an attack on Venice itself, as if a city sinking into the muck doesn't have enough trouble.

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

Jordan: An Internet battleground

SINCE SPRINT, now renamed Global One/Sprint Jordan, announced last week that it officially launched its Internet on-line service, the Jordanian market has witnessed massive activity with almost everyone talking about the Internet. Many companies and individuals who were preparing themselves for the launch of an Internet On-Line service surfaced, showing a high degree of knowledge of the Internet and its services. Such companies include Magnet, B.O.C., JoLine and others.

What are they all doing? Well, it's hard to say at this stage, but they're trying to gain the best publicity possible to be the ones that capitalize on the Internet surge that the company is living in nowadays. B.O.C., in particular, where intelligent enough to get the representation for the leading Internet software, Netscape Navigator. If you intend to surf the World Wide Web, the Internet's friendliest and most varied network, then you're going to need "navigating software" such as Mosaic, Sun Java, or Netscape.

Already B.O.C. are offering Netscape to Macintosh and PC users. Magnet, to the best of my knowledge, was set up to provide an alternative Internet On-Line service to the one offered by Global One/Sprint Jordan. However, now it seems that the company is going to be focusing on providing consultancy services to set up World Wide Web sites to clients. Magnet may also launch an "Intranet" service. Yes that's spelled correctly. It's "Intra-net" not "Inter-net". What is it? It's actually a local adaptation of the Internet. To put it in simpler terms, it's like providing a local network with Internet contents, like a Jordanian World Wide Web (expect not actually worldwide).

The advantage is that you surf this local web at local phone rates, just as if you were logged into NETS or Access. By downloading Internet content, you'll get the closest thing to the Internet, on a local dial-up line. Anyway, getting back to the Internet craze in the country, even newspapers are getting in on the act. For example, Al-Azwaq newspaper has started to publish a weekly page on the Internet. The page is sponsored by Global One/Sprint Jordan and its content will be prepared in cooperation with Magnet.

Jordanian newspapers are now available on the Internet, such as *The Star* and *Ad-Dustour*, both of which publish electronic versions through Arabia On-Line. It is the only Arab Internet information service based in the region. It's good to know that it's run by Jordanians out of Jebel Luweideh. Arabia On-Line is a whole story in its own right.

It's important to remember that, apart from just being on the Internet because it sounds so hot, you actually need to be doing something on the Internet or using it for something: like communicating with other people, mining for useful information, surfing for leisure or just adding your own content. The most frequently asked questions by users at this stage are: How can I join? How much will it cost me?

At the moment, joining means subscribing to the Global One/Sprint Jordan service. As to "how much", very few people still know exactly how much. We need a brochure or price list from Global One/Sprint to find that out. Strangely enough, NETS is already offering Internet on-line connectivity through its cooperation with Global One/Sprint Jordan, and is announcing "bundle rates" which sounds fine to start with. For example, it could cost you JD 42 for 10 hours a month on the Internet. Price details are yet to become officially available from Global One/Sprint Jordan.

Some people I've talked to said that the Telecommunications Corp., has piles of applications from companies which wish to start an Internet on-line or bulletin board services (BBS). As everyone seems to be flocking to the Internet craze, we, as a level-headed industry watchers, should know better. The next few weeks should witness more activity, and possibly a little bit more confrontation between the different parties competing to get a piece of the emerging Internet market in Jordan. ■

Arab League

Monna must for radioactive

30 Agencies—Secretary

of the Arab League,

Shel Meguid, told a

conference that the Isra-

el should be monitored

so far reports have

been any radioactive

Arab League wants the

United Nations to

inspect the site. It

should scrap its

program, he said.

There are

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